



# Reconstituting the Order of Things in Northern and Southern Song

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# Reconceptualizing the Order of Things in Northern and Southern Sung

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### The Sung Intellectual Legacy

To begin at the end: The intellectual legacy of the Sung period was a reconceptualization of the order of things -- of the relations between past and present, cosmos and human affairs, state and society, culture and morality -- that would not be fundamentally challenged until the seventeenth century.

The social context for this reconceptualization was a transformation of the national elite, of men who thought of themselves as *shih* 士, from the offspring of families with long pedigrees of state service in the T'ang, to men whose membership in the national elite was vouchsafed by their education. The civil service examinations, which had been expanded to become the primary means of recruiting civil officials in the late tenth century, together with a system of state schools, which had been extended down to the county level in the later half of the eleventh century, encouraged those with the means to acquire an education and seek recognition. The numbers participating in the examination system increased steadily: as many of 450,000 in Southern Sung territory by the mid-thirteenth century. The fact that every three years only 400-600 received the coveted *chin-shih* degree, and only 500-700 "facilitated" degrees were given to those who had repeatedly failed the examinations, makes clear that the pool of "literati" (as we may now translate the term *shih* in recognition of the importance of a literary education to their status) was far larger than the number of officials and provided an expanding market for those who could provide others with an education.

In tracing the development of literati thought there is an important distinction between the Northern and Southern Sung periods, a distinction that also has a regional character. The Northern Sung intellectuals most influential at the time generally were concerned with the state

and its officials and their potential for transforming society. Northern Sung intellectual culture had different outcomes in the north and south. Although the north China plain was lost to the Chin dynasty (1115-1234) in 1126, during the latter half of the twelfth century the examination system was restored to the point that, although its examination and school system were less elaborate, it was granting more degrees to a smaller pool of literati than was the case in Sung territory. Chin literati largely continued the more conservative state-oriented intellectual trends of the Northern Sung.<sup>1</sup> In contrast Southern Sung intellectuals generally were more concerned with the ways in which individual, communal, and local activities could be made to serve the common good.

Thus in speaking of the Sung legacy we are concerned with that which took final shape during the Southern Sung period, a fact that bears on our understanding of the social context of intellectual life. For the Southern Sung state came to depend on the same market-based economy of the south that supported the large numbers of literati elite families who participated in the examination system. In contrast to T'ang the Southern Sung government rarely sought control over the economy and private interests and, in contrast to Northern Sung, the Southern Sung government was far less interested in transforming society into an ideal order. The rise of literati elites with considerable local self-consciousness, the belief that literati without official status should organize voluntary local efforts in culture and education, welfare and local defense, and the spread of private academies which prided themselves on encouraging learning rather than mere examination preparation, are all dealt with in other chapters. I mention them here because

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<sup>1</sup> China under Jurchen Rule: Essays in Chin Intellectual and Cultural History, eds. Hoyt C. Tillman and Stephen West (Albany: SUNY, 1995). Peter K. Bol, "Seeking Common Ground: Han Literati under Jurchen Rule." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies 47, no. 2 (1987): 461-538.

important intellectual movements in Southern Sung spread laterally, through local literati communities, rather than being mandated by the state or being part of the political culture of the bureaucracy, as had been the case in Northern Sung and T'ang and would remain the case under the Chin, and they encouraged literati to think that things of national importance could be practiced at the local level through voluntary efforts.

For Sung literati what we would call the reconceptualization of the order of things was a matter of redefining “learning” *hsüeh* 學, a term which includes both knowledge acquisition and ideological formation. It is common to think of Sung intellectual history (*sans* its Buddhist and Taoist participants) in terms of a revival of “Confucianism” leading to “Neo-Confucianism.” In recent times scholars have used the term Confucianism rather broadly: to hypostatize a “traditional” political culture and social system or an orthodoxy of state-supported and state-supporting values, or to refer to traditions of teaching and learning associated with the people who called themselves *Ju* 儒. To take “learning” as the topic for this chapter, even when limiting the discussion to literati ideas about learning, allows us to give more central roles to thinkers such as Wang An-shih and Su Shih, whom the Neo-Confucian definition of *Ju* learning marginalized. Even those Sung literati who did propose definitions of what it meant to be a true *Ju* defined their mission as one of teaching others how they should learn. The subjects of this chapter generally believed that they were (re)discovering the one true way to learn, and most claimed that it stemmed from Confucius and the sage-kings. However, they did not agree with each other about what that way was. In looking at how they formulated their ideas I shall give particular attention to how they differed one from another.

From the perspective of later centuries the Sung was a second founding of elite culture: it provided the lens through which antiquity was to be understood, its writers and thinkers provided

literary assumptions and philosophical ideas with reference to which later literature and thought proceeded. Earlier practices continued but their status and methodology changed. At the heart of this change was a conviction that ideas and the vehicles of their expression could be separated. By the end of Southern Sung the paraphrastic approach to exegesis of the canon at the core of *Ju* scholarship from Han on, evident in the T'ang Correct Meanings of the Five Classics , , gave way to the application of systematic and coherent philosophical inquiry, such as found in Chu Hsi's Collected Commentaries on the Four Books. The art of literary composition, which had become a crucial marker of *shih* education after the Han remained part of education but, as intellectuals came to see learning as a matter of understanding ideas, lost the ideological significance it had gained during the heyday of the Ancient Style (*ku-wen* 古文). If Confucian textual learning from the time of the Analects on had been thought of as *wen-hsüeh* 文學, where the texts and cultural forms were to be studied and modeled after, then the tone of learning in Sung was closer to what the Neo-Confucians called *Tao-hsüeh* 道學, in which learning was the enterprise of cultivating the ability to see and practice the "Way" as something that could be distinguished from texts and culture. An early statement of this – but also an indication that the distinction was not at first obvious – dates from 1037 when Ts'ai Hsiang (1012-1067) criticized a man for thinking that by imitating Han Yü, the progenitor of the writing of the Ancient Style, he was achieving something of value:

[My earlier letter said that] when you proceed from tao to learn wen then tao is attained and wen is also attained. Those who proceed from wen to tao and have difficulties with tao are many. This is why tao is the basis of wen and wen is the function of tao. It is more important to attract others through tao than through wen.

In your previous letter you spoke in terms of literary elaborations, that is why I said this. It is not that I am deprecating literary writing, but that there is a necessary sequence to things.<sup>2</sup>

Ts'ai's correspondent demurred: by studying the right wen he was acquiring its tao as well.<sup>3</sup> Ts'ai wrote back, explaining, "What I meant was that scholars should put learning tao first and learning wen second. Yet you say that the tao of the Six Classics all proceeded through wen in order to become clear and that you have never heard of men who began through the wen [of the Classics] and lost tao. You have missed the point of my earlier letter."<sup>4</sup> The point is that in Sung it became possible to be self-consciously ideological, to treat ideas as things of value. The implication of this could be that true values were not grounded in the cultural tradition at all, as Lin Jizhong 林季仲 (d. 1138+) asserted: "the Way does not survive due to books. . . . it comes from that which is constant in the human mind."<sup>5</sup>

The most influential reconceptualization of the order of things was established by proponents of Tao-hsüeh, formulated initially by Ch'eng I (1033-1107) and consolidated by Chu Hsi (1130-1200), and it is the spread of Tao-hsüeh ideology among literati communities, the court's installation of the leading Tao-hsüeh thinkers in the Confucian Temple in 1241, and the formal adoption of Tao-hsüeh thought into the examination system (through Chu Hsi's commentaries on the Four Books) in 1315 that leads to the conclusion that it would not be possible to speak of "Neo-Confucianism" without Tao-hsüeh. The Tao-hsüeh movement in the Southern Sung is the subject of a separate chapter and will be treated only briefly in this one. The Tao-hsüeh

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<sup>2</sup> Ts'ai Hsiang 蔡襄, Tuan-ming chi 端明集 (SKCS ed.) 27.7b.

<sup>3</sup> For another example of this view at the time see Su Shun-ch'in chi (Shanghai: Shang-hai ku-chi, 1981), 9.102, letter to Sun.

<sup>4</sup> Ts'ai, Tuan-ming chi 27.9b-10a.

<sup>5</sup> Lin Chi-chung 林季中, Chu-hsien tsa-chu 竹軒雜著 (SKQS), 3.17a-18a.



perspective on the order of things revitalized some elements of earlier imperial Confucianism, such as the conviction – doubted and set aside by the T'ang and Northern Sung Ancient Style writers – that heaven-and-earth (the natural order) functioned as a coherent, integrated system and that this natural order was fundamental to human morality. But it also transformed them, for example by asserting that the principles of that coherent order were endowed equally in all human beings as human nature, and that the social worth of individuals should be a function of their cultivation of this moral nature. What is clear is that Tao-hsüeh as moral philosophy shifted the focus of inquiry away the problem of how to make political power function morally to the question of how individuals could cultivate in themselves the real grounds of moral judgment. Tao-hsüeh had thus a particular appeal for the masses of literati who saw themselves as aspiring to leadership and wished to act responsibly but could not reasonably expect an examination degree or office.

Tao-hsüeh not the only intellectual legacy of the Sung period. Far little attention has been given to the many scholars who produced historical studies and treatises on aspects of statecraft, the most influential of which were southeastern literati such as Yeh Shih (1150-1223), from Yungchia in Wen Prefecture. Like the Neo-Confucians, with whom they had parted ways by the end of the twelfth century, the statecraft thinkers transformed some earlier imperial convictions. They shared, for example, a traditional concern with the structure of the state and a belief in the importance of the economy, but rather than arguing for an expansion of the state's control over economic and social processes as had still been common in Northern Sung, they called for a smaller and less centralized state which facilitated private exchange and they saw social benefit in the private accumulation of wealth. Statecraft thought was geared toward those who served in government at court and in the provinces, but it also addressed questions of great importance to literati elites who had to deal with the political and economic realities of their own locale. This

chapter will conclude by exploring certain compatibilities between the statecraft views of the Yung-chia scholars and the new moral philosophy of the Neo-Confucians.

Southern Sung literati had access to a vibrant intellectual culture with multiple teachers at local centers in Che-chiang, Chiang-hsi, Fu-chien, and Ssu-ch'uan. But its leaders also looked back to Northern Sung and defined themselves relative to its diverse legacy. As Chu Hsi once asked students: who among those “famed for learning in recent times” got the Way of Confucius right: Hu Yüan, Ou-yang Hsiu, Wang An-shih, Ssu-ma Kuang, Su Shih and Su Ch'e, or Ch'eng Hao and Ch'eng I?<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere Chu argued that the Northern Sung legacy offered three serious choices. There was the “Wang Learning” of Wang An-shih (1021-1086), which had been put into the official curriculum under the New Policies regimes that dominated the last fifty years of Northern Sung and there were the learnings of Su Shih (1037-1101) and Ch'eng I, who in the next generation offered alternatives to Wang.<sup>7</sup> Although Chu sought to demonstrate the incorrectness of Su and Wang, others thought each of the three had something to offer. Yüan Hsing-tsung 員興宗 (d. 1170) argued in a model examination essay that each of the three had different but compatible strengths. Ch'eng stood for innate morality, Su for pragmatic statecraft, and Wang for institutionalized systems.<sup>8</sup> Literati under the Chin had a similar view, but in contrast to their Southern Sung contemporaries they favored Su Shih over Ch'eng I.<sup>9</sup>

To explain how these alternatives appeared and what they had to offer we must return to the beginning of the Sung dynasty, long before these outcomes could have been predicted.

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<sup>6</sup> Chu Hsi 朱熹, Hui-an hsien-sheng Chu wen-kung wen-chi 晦庵先生朱文公文集 (Rpt. Taipei: Ta-hua, nd) 74.5a, 12b-13a.

<sup>7</sup> Bol, “Chu Hsi's Redefinition of Literati Learning,” in John Chaffee and Wm. T. de Bary, eds., Neo-Confucian Education: The Formative Stage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 161-163.

<sup>8</sup> Yüan Hsing-tsung 員興宗, Chiu-hua chi 九華集 (SKQS) 9.15a.

<sup>9</sup> See the essays collected in Hoyt C. Tillman and Stephen West, eds., China Under Jurchen Rule: Essays in Chin Intellectual and Cultural History (Albany: SUNY, 1995).

### Culture and Ideology 960-1030

The early Sung emperors were inclusive. They halted the Later Chou's attacks on Buddhism and funded the building of new Buddhist and Taoist temples. A translation bureau was established for foreign Buddhist texts and students were sent to the west to study. By the end of Emperor Chen-tsung's reign (997-1022) over 397,000 monks were on the state registers,<sup>10</sup> and that emperor's receipt of letters from heaven authorizing his performance of the Feng and Shan sacrifices on Mount Tai resulted in even more patronage for Taoist printing and building projects.<sup>11</sup> They also patronized both the *Ju* Classics and Confucian Temple and the broader array of textual traditions -- histories, ritual, law, and literary art -- that had become part of political culture. They received advice from diverse quarters: not only from *Ju* who saw the Classics as the enduring guide to moral government, but also from advisers who looked back to Han and spoke of Huang-Lao thought in governing the empire or who looked back to T'ang and spoke of rulers who were "non-active" and supported Taoism in the manner of Emperor Hsüan-tsung.

There is little indication that the founders let ideology trump practical politics. However, in one respect they did tie learning directly to politics. This was the solution, adopted during T'ai-tsung's reign (976-1007), to the question of who to recruit as officials for the newly unified empire and how to recruit them. The decision to recruit the *shih* -- rather than military men, clergy, clerical administrators, the locally powerful, and the

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<sup>10</sup> Ku Chi-ch'en 顧吉辰, Sung-tai fo-chiao shih 宋代佛教史稿, (Cheng-chou: Chung-chou ku-chi ch'u-pan she, 1993), pp. 1-9, 101-2.

<sup>11</sup> Jen Chi-yü 任繼愈, ed., Chung-kuo tao-chiao shih 中國道教史, (Taipei: Kui-k'uan t'u-shu ku-fen yu-hsien kung-ssu, 1991), pp. 507-515.

offspring of powerful families – and to do by expanding the examinations that tested their knowledge of canonical texts and ability in literary composition.

A decision to favor the *shih* and examinations meant that the price of entry into government service would be *wen* 文: the shared knowledge of the textual traditions which had their origins in the Chou dynasty and harkened back to governance of the sage kings of antiquity, an ability to produce culturally resonant texts themselves, and above all a commitment to governance through “civil” (*wen*) rather than military means. After a century of war the civil side’s turn had come. But the idea of “civil” rule by men schooled in textual traditions and literary art was not just a swing of the pendulum, it had been theorized as a choice in the eighth and ninth century.<sup>12</sup> The great promise of *wen* was that it would bring about an era of stable government under benevolent central authority, as T’ai-tsung made clear when he produced a work with the title When Wen is Bright Governance Transforms (*Wen ming cheng hua*).<sup>13</sup> The examination system Sung had inherited from the T’ang and the Later Chou tested *wen*, offering degrees in the “various fields,” for which candidates memorized sets of ritual, historical, classical, and legal texts, and the more prestigious *chin-shih* or “*shih* presented at Court” for which they composed a regulated verse poem, a rhapsody, an essay, and several treatises on current issues of government or scholarship. It was T’ai-tsung also who first saw the expanded the exams into the major recruitment mechanism, automatically gave rank and office to those who passed, and encouraged men to acquire a *shih* education. The growing popularity of the examinations is

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<sup>12</sup> McMullen, David. L. “Historical and Literary Theory in the Mid Eight Century” Perspectives on the T’ang, ed. Ed. Arthur F. Wright, and Denis Twitchett, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973): 307-342.

<sup>13</sup> Wang Ying-lin 王應麟, Yü-hai 玉海 (rpt. Taipei: Hua-wen, 1964), 38.31

evident: 5,200 attended the departmental examination in 977, 10,200 in 983, and 17,300 in 992.<sup>14</sup>

However, already in the late tenth century there were two very different ways of thinking about the significance of the civil, cultural, and literary heritage, both of which came from T'ang. The first, much favored at court, followed the early T'ang practice of taking possession of the past by sorting and compiling its textual legacy into new works. The T'ai-p'ing Era Imperial Reader in 1000 *chüan* from 983 covered historical knowledge about heaven, earth, and humanity; its counterpart was the T'ai-p'ing Era Extended Record from 978 in 500 *chüan* which dealt with religion and the realm of unseen forces. The Ts'e-fu yüan-kuei from 1013 in 1000 *chüan* categorized historical knowledge about the affairs of government. The Finest Blossoms from the Park of Literature from 987, also in 1000 *chüan*, anthologized earlier belletrist literature. A History of the Five Dynasties was commissioned and revised editions of major T'ang historical sources were completed. Projects were launched to print the existing seventeen dynastic histories and to issue a definitive printed edition of the Classics.<sup>15</sup> Such efforts brought scholars to court, but their significance lay in what was implied by the fact of having done them: that the Sung, having unified north and south, was taking responsibility for the culture heritage, for *Ssu-wen* or "This Culture of Ours," and had proclaimed itself the rightful successor to all preceding dynasties.

Against this compilatory style of court scholarship was the later T'ang model of idealistic writing represented by the "Ancient Style" (*ku wen*)<sup>16</sup> of Han Yü and Liu Tsung-

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<sup>14</sup> Peter K. Bol, "This Culture of Ours" -- Intellectual Transitions in T'ang and Sung China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 151-5.

<sup>15</sup> Bol, "This Culture", pp. 152-3.

<sup>16</sup> In the eleventh century *ku-wen* comes to mean discursive prose written in a style that recalls ancient

yüan. The Ancient Style was a way of learning and a way of writing that was inherently polemical. Its practitioners called upon *shih* to seek the “Way of the Sages” (*sheng-jen chih tao*) who had created civilization and to write in a fashion that demonstrated that they had absorbed the values of the ancients and were prepared to apply them to the present day. But if they were to do so, Han Yü had told the scholars of his day, each had to be his own man and break with the conventions of the times. The Ancient Style could justify being exclusive rather than inclusive, polemical rather than accommodative. It could justify breaking with tradition in order to establish a truer continuity with antiquity by using the “way of the sages” of antiquity to save the age, which could mean saving it from those who held power at court. Yao Hsüan’s The Best of Literature (*Wen cui*) from 1011, an anthology of post-An Lu-shan rebellion T’ang writing that gave pride of place to the “Ancient Style,” presented itself as an alternative to the all those anthologies that modeled themselves on the Selections from Refined Literature (*Wen hsüan*), principal among which was none other than the recently compiled Finest Blossoms from the Park of Literature!

Thus in the midst of a growing consensus that Sung should establish a civil order managed by men schooled in textual traditions and possessed of literary skill, there were those who argued that merely the fact of it being *wen* was not enough, it had to be good *wen*, and that good *wen* meant the Ancient Style because it alone came from a true devotion to the highest of human ideals. One of the first to gain fame for this stance was Liu K’ai (947-1000), a *chin-shih* degree holder who never became a court scholar. Liu K’ai constructed himself as the champion and successor of Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan. He chose his final name, K’ai, with the meaning “to open,” to announce his conviction that, like Han, he had apprehended the Way of the Sages for himself and

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texts and containing content that applies the ideals of antiquity to the present. In Han Yü’s time, however, it is not clear that there was a dichotomy between prose and poetry. The translation “Ancient Style” should not be taken to mean that “style” alone mattered.

was now ready to “open” the way for his times, “so that past and present proceed through me.”<sup>17</sup> A critic objected that Liu narrowly promoted the ancient style at the expense of a broader mastery of the textual tradition and made of point of being different from the age. Judge me in terms of the Ancient Way, Liu wrote to, and you will see that my *wen* is without error, for “My way is the Way of Confucius, Mencius, Yang Hsiung, and Han Yü and my *wen* is the *Wen* of Confucius, Mencius, Yang Hsiung, and Han Yü.”<sup>18</sup> From Liu’s perspective the way of the sages could be applied in any age, it was not contingent on history, and he urged Emperor Chen-tsung to completely reorganize the political system and “establish new policies.”<sup>19</sup> Wang Yü-ch’eng (954-1006), who did have a career at court but also a reputation as a political critic, argued that only writing that was based on the Classics and the five moral norms deserved to be called “*wen*,” for only men whose learning was based on the Classics would govern with benevolence and righteousness.<sup>20</sup>

Behind Ancient Style claims were ideas about personal transformation. Liu K’ai contended that one should learn to be like a sage rather than imitating the Classics or laboring over commentaries. Rather than studying the texts with which the sages transformed people, he told his readers, become a source oneself of the texts that would guide others. To be a sage meant to see the whole, and thus respond to problems by making clear the proper role of any part. Do not imitate the sage’s responses, understand the attitudes that generated them, and be the sage

<sup>17</sup> Liu K’ai, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* (*San Sung jen chi* ed.) 2.5b. For a discussion of Liu’s views see Bol, “This Culture”, pp. 162-5.

<sup>18</sup> Liu K’ai 柳開, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* 河東先生集 (*San Sung jen chi* ed.) 1.10b-11b.

<sup>19</sup> *Sung shih* 宋史, ed. T’o T’o 脫脫 et al. (Peking: Chung-hua, 1977), 440.13025-7

<sup>20</sup> Wang Yü-ch’eng 王禹偁, *Hsiao-ch’u chi* 小畜集 (*Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen ts’ung-shu*) 19.266-67, 19.269, and Ch’en Chih-o 臣智鏐, “Lüeh-lun Sung-ch’u ku-wen yün-tung te liang-chung ch’ing-hsiang” 略論宋初古文運動的兩種傾向, in Teng Kuang-ming 鄧廣銘 and Li Chia-chü 酈家駒 eds., *Sung shih yen-chiu lun-wen chi* 宋史研究論文集 (Honolulu: Ho-nan jen-min, 1984), pp. 431-451.

oneself. One could be a sage because these attitudes were natural to the human mind: benevolence (*jen*) was simply the instinctive familial feeling which kept people from separating and righteousness (*yi*) was the sense of systematic organization which allowed one to see what was proper to each thing.<sup>21</sup> Such ideas explained why a *shih* with *wen* could play a mediating role between ancient ideals and present circumstances, between the court above and the populace below, another student of Han and Liu, Chang Yung (946-1004) explained, for those who grasped the Way of the Sages were the ones who could decide how social roles, rituals, and political principles of antiquity could be given new form in the present.<sup>22</sup> Ancient Style advocates like Chang and his contemporary T'ien Hsi (940-1003) decried imitation, it was necessary to understand the Way for oneself if he was to guide the world under present circumstances. T'ien was willing to include all textual traditions on the grounds that culture, like heaven-and-earth, had both constant patterns and its variations. The scholar who could “thread them all on a single strand” was prepared to become one with the process of creation itself, then his character would transcend its limitations, his responses to events would be true to his ennobled nature, and whatever he wrote would be spontaneously orderly and integrated and appropriate. For Tian Ancient Style learning promised a way to create things in culture just as cosmos did in the natural world.<sup>23</sup>

Although later times would reduce the Ancient Style to a manner of writing prose and treat its proponents as mere literary men, in their own times they were the creative force in “Confucian” thought. We have confirmation of this from an unexpected quarter, the monk Chih-yüan (976-1022), a man young enough to be a student of those discussed above, who declared

<sup>21</sup> Liu K'ai, *Ho-tung hsien-sheng chi* 5.5a-9b.

<sup>22</sup> Chang Yung 張詠. *Kuai-yai chi* 乖崖集 (SKCS ed.), 10.11a, 7.14b-15a.

<sup>23</sup> T'ien Hsi 田錫. *Hsien-p'ing chi* 咸平集 (SKCS ed.), 2.10b-13a. Also see Bol, “This Culture”, pp. 158-60.



that learning to write in the Ancient Style was what “learning to be a *Ju*” ought to mean and taught it to other monks. For Zhiyuan the Ancient Style was integrally tied to an intellectual position, it was not merely a style. To practice it required illuminating in one’s mind the “Ancient Way” of Confucius, being able to change with the times yet maintain continuity with antiquity, producing writings that would transform others, and thus saving the age and setting government on the right path.<sup>24</sup>

However, the Liu K’ais of the world were not yet the dominant voice. In the 1010s and 1020s that belonged to such prolific and talented court scholars as Yang I (974-1020), whose sophistication and erudition in literary composition, rather than moral engagement, was thought to represent to the kind of literary talent that the court ought to value and that *shih* ought to master if they wished to be successful in the examinations. This helps explain why, when in the 1030s a new generation of scholars took up the Ancient Style they saw themselves as rediscovering something that had been forgotten and why they combined advocacy of the Ancient Style with an attack on Yang I and all he represented.<sup>25</sup>

### From Learning to Politics: The Fan Chung-yen Faction

The historiography of Sung thought for the most part begins with Fan Chung-yen (989-1052) and his supporters who, beginning in the mid 1020s began to call for a government that would put the Way of the Sages into practice. They gained power only briefly, in 1043-44, and

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<sup>24</sup> T’ao Ch’iu-ying 陶秋英 and Yü Hsing 虞行 eds., Sung Chin Yüan wen-lun hsüan 宋金元文論選, (Peking: Jen-min wen-hsüeh, 1984), pp. 16-18. For a fuller discussion see Albert Welter, “A Buddhist Response to the Confucian Revival: Tsan-ning and the Debate over Wen in the Early Sung,” in Peter Gregory, and Jr. Daniel A. Getz eds., Buddhism in the Sung (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999): 21-61.

<sup>25</sup> Bol, “This Culture”, pp. 161-62.

although their program, later known as the Ch'ing-li Reform, was immediately discontinued they had a lasting impact on literati consciousness. The reformers aspired to translate a particular style of learning, the Ancient Style, into an effective political program and they used their own well-publicized commitment to that learning to justify their effort to gain power at court. Moreover their writings promoted a vision of what government should do and offered literati a higher purpose for their times and the dynasty they served: the creation of a state that would work for the material welfare of all and create a common culture.<sup>26</sup>

Beginning in 1025 Fan began to call on the court to change its learning and its policies. The key, he argued, was to change the *wen* of the times, the style of writing, from the current refined "Six Dynasties" manner of refined parallelism and writing concerned with its own appearance to the style of the Three Dynasties of antiquity and writing that sought to transform the world. This was the basis, he argued, for once this choice was made then the ruler would find that the right men to help transform society were those who took their models from antiquity. The ruler had to choose. He could set out to transform society through instruction (*chiao-hua*) or

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<sup>26</sup> For an account of this period see James T. C. Liu, "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen," in Chinese Thought and Institutions, ed. John K. Fairbank, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), pp. 105-131 and Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh Century Neo-Confucianist (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967); also Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 166-201. The tradition of beginning Sung intellectual history with the Fan group began as early as Chu Hsi and was adopted by the Sung Yüan hsüeh-an. See also, for example, Morohashi Tetsuji 諸橋 轍 次, Jugaku no mokuteki to Soju: Keireki Keigen shi hyaku-rokujunenkan no katsudo 儒學目的と宋儒慶曆至慶元百六十年間の活動 (Tokyo: Taishukan shoten, 1929), Liu Fu-sheng 劉復生, Pei Sung chung-ch'i ju-hsüeh fu-hsing yün-tung 北宋中期儒學復興運動, (Taipei: Wen-chin, 1991), Hsü Hung-hsing 徐洪興, Ssu-hsiang te chuan-hsing 思想的轉型, (Shanghai: Shanghai jen-min, 1996), and Wm. Theodore de Bary, "A Reappraisal of Neo-Confucianism," in Studies in Chinese Thought, ed. Arthur F. Wright, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953): 81-111. On the Ancient Style movement during this period see Ho Chi-p'eng, 何寄澎, Pei Sung te ku-wen yün-tung 北宋的古文運動, (Taipei: Yu-shih wen-hua shih-yeh kung-ssu, 1992).

he could continue on the mistaken course of practicing non-action and non-interference (*wu-wei*).<sup>27</sup>

### *The Ancient Style Vision and the Classics*

Han Yü's "On the Origin of the Way" provided an intellectual, literary, and political model for the reformers. Han Yu's basic argument was that concepts like the "way" and "morality" were not real in themselves but a matter of definition. So the real issue was what literati should use to arrive at a definition that would work to the benefit of all. The essay was his answer to the question "What is the source for the way we should follow?" The answer was antiquity, when the sage kings created political, social, cultural, and economic institutions and wove them together into an integrated order that met the common needs and desires of the populace. They created rulers and armies to lead and protect the people; clothing, food, and housing that brought them out of a state of competition with animals. They created specialized roles to help them: craftsman and traders to make and circulate goods and doctors to cure their ills. They had instituted the means of human community with rites and music, weights and measures, laws and punishments, walls and guards. They created writing and texts; they created government and hierarchy. The other part of Han's message was that literati had lost sight of this model and the values that supported it, first due to the attacks of other schools of thought in Mencius' time and later due to their infatuation with Buddhism and Taoism, which turned their attention away from thinking about how family, society, and politics could be made to serve the common good. The point of individual cultivation was not transcendence. The point of

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<sup>27</sup> Fan Chung-yen 范仲淹, *Fan Wen-cheng kung chi* 范文正公集 (SPTK) 7.5b-11b, 8.5b, 8.10a-b, 9.2b. See also Fan's essays on these subjects, 5.9b-13b.

“correcting the mind and making the intentions sincere,” Han argued, was to “accomplish something” (*yu wei*).<sup>28</sup>

For Han and those who looked back to him, antiquity represented the possibility of perfecting this world. Part of that task involved ending the influence of religion in society, and part of it was constructing a social order different from that of the present. One of the striking things about Han’s essays is that it is an overall interpretation of what “antiquity” meant based on many different texts, rather than being a mere citation or elaboration on passages from the Classics. In this sense it represented a shift in intellectual authority from the Classics to the interpretation of the Classics by particular individuals.

Fan’s supporters explained what this meant in their own writings during the 1030s and 1040s. In doing so they transformed the study of the Classics from the mastery of commentary tested in the “various fields” examinations to a means of discovering larger principles that applied equally to past and present. And they encouraged a new style of teaching, one in which students and teacher learned to investigate the meaning of the Classics for themselves and discuss how what they found should be applied to the world in which they lived. The most famous of the new style teachers was Hu Yüan 胡瑗 (993-1059), who entered Fan’s camp as a prefectural teacher and eventually became one of the stars of an expanded Imperial University (T’ai-hsüeh). Although Hu lectured extensively on the Classics his greatest influence was as a teacher who taught students to think for themselves about what the Classics meant and to

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<sup>28</sup> Han Yü 韓愈, Han Ch'ang-li chi 韓昌黎集, Chu Hsi ed. (rpt. Hong Kong: Shang-wu, 1964), 3.11.59-63. Discussed in Charles Hartman, Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 145-62, and Bol, “This Culture of Ours”, pp. 128-31.

investigate ways in which they could use government to improve society, whether in military affairs or water conservancy.<sup>29</sup>

An example of this new style of interpretation, which like the Ancient Style had its origins in Han Yü's times, is Sun Fu's (992-1057) famous commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals (the Ch'un-chiu tsun-wang fa-wei). Sun, who had become a protégé of Fan's in the 1020s, both illustrated what it meant to seek the way of the sages and reached conclusions that lent to support for political reform. The message of the Annals as Sun understood it was that China's continued existence depended on protecting itself from barbarian invasion but that this was only possible by rejuvenating its own civilization, for it was the strength of that, not military power, that would force foreign enemies to accept its superiority. Thus rejuvenating that civilization had to be the primary goal, and to that end the political elite needed to be united under a strong central authority that shared this goal.<sup>30</sup>

The T'ang dynasty's official interpretation of the Classics, the Correct Meanings of the Five Classics, had aimed to create a unified view of the Classics by synthesizing the pre-T'ang exegetical tradition in a subcommentary on a single orthodox commentary. In contrast, during the course of the eleventh century literati increasingly wrote their own commentaries on various Classics in order to explain what they thought the sages meant, often giving short shrift to earlier interpretations. As they cleared away accumulation of interpretations in their search for original meanings they raised doubts about the very texts they believed gave them access to antiquity and

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<sup>29</sup> For Hu Yüan's pedagogy and Classics scholarship see Hsü Hung-hsing, Ssu-hsiang te chuan-hsing, pp. 296-325.

<sup>30</sup> Sun Fu 孫復, Ch'un-ch'iu tsun wang fa wei 春秋尊王發微 (T'ung-chih t'ang ching-chieh 1873). Alan T. Wood, Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995), pp. 81-110.

the sages, and began to pare and alter them to fit their own ideas.<sup>31</sup> Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072), a Fan loyalist, attacked traditions of interpretation in his The Original Meanings of the Book of Odes (Shih pen i) from the 1050s.<sup>32</sup> More famous was his repeated critique of the Book of Change, beginning in the 1030s. In order to argue that the way of the sages was guided by their understanding of human needs, rather than by an effort to fit themselves to the patterns of heaven-and-earth, Ou-yang argued that “The ancient Classic of Confucius has been lost” and that Confucius had nothing to do with the tradition of cosmological speculation that was part of the Change.<sup>33</sup> However, Sung skepticism toward received texts and interpretations was not, I think, a sign of a new empirical scholarship of the sort found in the Evidential Learning of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Rather, it was part of a search in antiquity and the Classics for universal valued to believe in.

### *The reform program and its implications*

The writings of Fan’s faction prior to 1043 announced its goals. Li Kou’s 李 構 (1009-1059) “On Ritual,” for example, set out a vision of antiquity in terms of a broad concept of ritual as an integrated order, created through government institutions that regulated and improved socioeconomic and cultural life. For Li the historical experience of the Han and T’ang offered no

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<sup>31</sup> Yeh Kuo-liang 葉國良, Sung ren yi jing gai jing kao 宋人疑經改經考, Wen-shih congkan (Taipei: Kuo-li Taiwan ta-hsü wen-hsüeh yüan, 1980).

<sup>32</sup> Steven van Zoeren, Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) and Bol, “This Culture of Ours”, pp. 199-201.

<sup>33</sup> Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph Adler, and Don J Wyatt, Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 29-42. On Hu Yüan’s commentary on the Change that supported the Fan party see Tze-ki Hon, “Northern Sung “Yijing” Exegesis and the Formation of Neo-Confucianism” (Ph.D. University of Chicago University of Chicago, 1992), pp. 66-112. For a survey of 56 of the 207 Sung commentaries on the Change see Wang Chi-hsi 王基西, “Pei Sung i-hsüeh k’ao” 北宋易學考 (MA thesis, Kuo-li Taiwan ta-hsüeh, 1978).

worthwhile lessons and Buddhism and Taoism were obstacles to correct thought.<sup>34</sup> Ou-yang Hsiu's "Essay on Fundamentals" also called for an activist state, one capable of gathering the fiscal resources necessary to defend the country and transform society.<sup>35</sup> The true "degradation of the Confucians," Sun Fu wrote, was to serve merely as administrators, to ignore the sage kings' fundamental ideas, and to go along with honoring "barbarian" Buddhism and Taoism.<sup>36</sup> Sun Fu pointed out that it was the activist path of Yao, Shun, and Yü that literati should follow – not all the models from antiquity were right, such the "non-action" associated with Huang-ti, Fu Hsi, and Shen Nung;.<sup>37</sup> For Shih Chieh (1005-1045) it was both the Buddhism and Taoism and the literary style of Yang I that kept the age from seeing the way of the sages.<sup>38</sup> What literati should learn from antiquity, Shih insisted, was the necessity of the systematic and coherent arrangement of all affairs into a single system.<sup>39</sup>

The Fan group set out to moralize politics, with it being the moral party against the amoral careerists. Rather than deflecting the charge of factionalism they embraced it. As Ou-yang Hsiu explained in his famous essay "On Parties" (P'eng-tang lun'): only "superior men" (*chün-tzu*) are capable of forming friendships based on the Way and they will necessarily be opposed by "inferior men" (*hsiao-jen*) who joined together only when their self-interest was at

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<sup>34</sup> Li Kou 李 覲 . Li Kou chi 李 覲集 (Peking: Chung-hua, 1981), pp. 7-9. On Li Kou see Shan-yüan Hsieh, The life and thought of Li Kou, 1009-1059 (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1979) and Teraji Jun 寺地 遵 , "Ri Kō no rei-shisō to sono rekishiteki igi -- Hokusō jidai chuki no jieji jinushiso no shisō" 李 覲 の 禮 思想 と その 歴 史 的 意 義 -- 北 宋 時 代 中 期 自 營 地 主 層 の 思 想 , Shigaku kenkyū 史 學 研 究 118 (1973): 38-48.

<sup>35</sup> Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan-chi 歐 陽 修 全 集 (Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1961), 17.121-24 and wai-chi 8.411-13.

<sup>36</sup> Sun Fu 孫 復 , Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi 孫 明 復 孝 集 (SKCS), "Ju ju"

<sup>37</sup> Sun Fu, Sun Ming-fu hsiao-chi, "Wu-wei chih"

<sup>38</sup> Shih Chieh 石 介 , Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi 徂 徠 石 先 生 文 集 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1984) 5.60-64, 10.116-17, 19.221,

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, his description of the ancient system in "The Origins of Disorder" and "Returning to the Ancient System;" Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi 5.64-66 and 6.68-69.

stake. Antiquity and history proved that the fate of the dynasty depended upon putting the superior men in power, they were loyal and trustworthy, they had integrity, they cultivated themselves and served the state with one Way and one mind.<sup>40</sup>

When Fan Chung-yen and two other senior officials, Han Ch'i (1008-75) and Fu Pi (1004-1083), were finally given the chance to make policy in 1043 half of their proposals were aimed at enabling literati who shared their views to gain the upper hand in the bureaucracy. They called for promotion on the basis of merit rather than seniority, for limiting the right of high official to gain official rank for their descendants, favoring examination degree holders for high office, changing the examination system to favor men with a record of ethical conduct and a commitment to activist government, building local schools, improving the quality of local officials, and providing local officials with an adequate income. Staffing local government was essential to their aims, for they planned to increase agricultural production by having local government undertake water conservancy and land reclamation projects, cancel tax arrears from the previous reign, and reform the labor service system which burdened leading local families with the costs of tax collection and administrative support. In addition they called for improving national defense and requiring that all edicts and laws be followed by local officials.<sup>41</sup>

The reformers' program, like their vision of antiquity, was a top-down vision, in which government would transform society and literati, having demonstrated their ideological commitment through their writing, would serve in government. Yet this was not a resurrection of the imperial vision of T'ang, in which the court would dominate neighboring peoples, serve as the highest models of culture, be the apex of the social hierarchy, control the distribution of wealth, and command the economic and social lives of its subjects. Rather, Fan's group

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<sup>40</sup> Ou-yang Hsiu ch'üan-chi 17.124.

<sup>41</sup> Fan Chung-yen, Fan Wen-cheng kung chi, 1.14a-15a; Liu, James T. C. "An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen."



conceived of a common moral culture, which needed to be defended militarily against foreign encroachment but whose relations with foreign states would be defined by cultural superiority rather than conquest. Domestically it took into account the growth of the south, not by trying to limit access to power through ranking great clans, as T'ang had once done, but by arguing that being a *shih* was a matter of education rather than birth, and by encouraging greater participation in the examination system while reducing hereditary privilege. It envisioned an economic policy of investing in local agricultural infrastructure and reducing the tax burden of local elites, rather than trying to restore state command over land and labor.

The fact that Fan's group deployed antiquity as a justification for their vision, denigrated the Han and T'ang periods, and saw themselves as offering a new beginning suggests that they also saw their vision of an integrated social order and centralized polity as something quite different from the imperial style of Han and T'ang. And, although the reformers saw government as the vehicle for an order of things in which the political and cultural were united – hardly a new idea – they in fact supposed that it was culture, through the circulation of writing and scholarship intended to form literati opinion, and the leaders of culture, those scholars who gained followings among the literati, that would guide politics. An eleventh century examination question put the issue thusly: “The men with whom the Son of Heaven shares the world under heaven all come from the literati (*shih*). The *tao* with which the literati serve the ruler and do things for the populace all come from what they learn. Thus the ruler's selection of literati is a serious matter and, because it is serious, there are rules for it; what the literati learn is a serious matter and, because it is serious, there are also rules for it.”<sup>42</sup> The Fan group appealed to all those who thought that the literati should decide the rules of learning for themselves. And this meant,

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<sup>42</sup> Hsü Chi 徐積, Chieh hsiao chi 節孝集 (SKCS) 29.11b.

as some noted unhappily at the time, the court had lost its ability to control cultural discourse.<sup>43</sup> Ultimately it would not regain it.

The Fan group drew intellectual boundaries for good learning narrower than literati practice. The most obvious was their rhetorical militancy against Buddhism. There were literati who continued to admire Buddhism as a social institution and as justification for morality, or who espoused a Taoistic politics of non-interference in society, or who held that Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist traditions were compatible. On the Buddhist side there were monks who were sympathetic to reform but also defended Buddhism. The monk Ch'i-sung (1007-72), for example, wrote in the Ancient Style, attracted literati followers, and had contact with men like Li Kou and Ou-yang Hsiu.<sup>44</sup> Against their claim that their way of the sages was adequate to teach men how to be "good" he argued that that true values were ultimately internal, and thus something that Buddhists has a special understanding of. The ways of Buddhists and of the Confucians were "on one thread, but both were necessary."<sup>45</sup> The reformers also challenged assumptions widespread among the Ju. First, they denied that human beings were endowed with internal guides or determining qualities. Ou-yang Hsiu saw no need to inquire into human nature (*hsing*) and destiny (*ming*); to cultivate themselves and govern others literati required guides that were external to the self. Second, they rejected the traditional view that the sage kings had modeled the creation of civilization on the workings of heaven-and-earth. The way of the sage is actually better than heaven-and-earth, Shih Chieh opined, because whereas nature is irregular the

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<sup>43</sup> Su Ch'e 蘇轍, Lung ch'uan lüeh-chih 龍川略志 (SKCS) 1.11a-b.

<sup>44</sup> Ch'i-sung 契嵩, T'an-chin wen-chi 潭津文集 (SPTK), 10.4a.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, "On the Origins of Instruction," in Ch'i-sung, T'an -chin wen-chi 1.1a-12a. Chiang I-pin 蔣義斌, Sung-tai ju shih tiao-he lun chi p'ai-fou lun chihc yen-chin 宋代儒釋調和論及排佛論之演進, (Taipei: Taiwan Shang-wu, 1988), pp. iv, 4-9; Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 406-7.

way of the sages is unchanging. Ou-yang Hsiu concurred.<sup>46</sup> But this was the traditional Ru position. Third, they asserted that there was a real distinction between the Three Dynasties of antiquity and the empires of Han and T'ang; they could not be blended. Ou-yang's personal revision of the History of the Five Dynasties, illustrated many of these views and condemned its politicians.<sup>47</sup> But for many of their contemporaries the achievements of T'ang were something the Sung should aspire to, and the court began a revision of the History of T'ang almost immediately after Fan was dismissed.

It is common to see the Fan group as the beginning of Neo-Confucianism, but it is exactly those who were on the other side of their boundaries, literati who turned to heaven and earth and who believed in human nature, that would be most closely associated with the rise of Tao-hsüeh.

#### The Search for Coherent Systems and Methods in Mid-Eleventh Century

After the end of the reform in 1044 and until the young emperor Shen-tsung (r. 1067-1085) gave his support to Wang An-shih and the New Policies in 1069, the court largely steered clear of identifying itself with any one faction. Among literati intellectuals, however, a range of possibilities were being explored, although they had not yet become clearly marked and antagonistic schools of thought. They had as a common point of reference in the Ancient Style idea of a "way of sages" that could be apprehended through learning. This was supposed to be something that was valid despite historical change, could be shared by all who learned, and could guide the institution of an integrated and harmonious social order in practice. They also shared

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<sup>46</sup> Kidder Smith, Jr., Peter K. Bol, Joseph Adler, and Don J. Wyatt, Sung Dynasty Uses of the I Ching (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 29-42; Shih Chieh, Ts'u-lai Shih hsien-sheng wen-chi 19.221.

<sup>47</sup> Gung-wu Wang, "Feng Tao: an Essay on Confucian Loyalty," in Confucian Personalities, eds. Arthur F. Wright and Denis Twitchett. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 123-45

the belief that to understand something correctly was to see how all the parts fit together into a coherent and integrated whole. Behind this belief was the assumption that there was a fundamental unity to things. There were important differences among them, however, and we can distinguish between those who searched for systematic principles for organizing society, a method of judgment, and a real foundation for morality.

*Systematic principles for organizing society*

Wang An-shih (1021-1086) and Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086) were the great spokesmen in a paradigmatic conflict over the political order. Both had begun their careers at the time of the Ch'ing-li reforms, which had inspired Wang An-shih (1021-1086) and antagonized Ssu-ma. They were opposites in many ways. Wang was from a southern family that had only recently entered the bureaucracy and spent much of his career in the southern provinces; Ssu-ma came from a great family of northern court officials and served mainly at court. Wang made his reputation for his Ancient Style writing and studies of the Classics; Ssu-ma wrote in the same style but was famed for historical studies. Wang aimed to vastly expand the scope of government, making it intervene directly in social and economic life, with the aim of increasing the real wealth of the populace and the revenues of the government; Ssu-ma called for a more limited but effective government that would maintain stability and stop social change. Both assumed that the state led society and was responsible for ensuring that the populace had the right values. The substance of their policies are dealt with in other chapters. Here we shall look at them as men with ideas about how to learn.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This section is based on Bol, "Government, Society, and State: On the Political Visions of Ssu-ma Kuang (1019-1086) and Wang An-shih (1021-1086)" Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China, ed. Robert Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 128-192, and "This Culture of Ours", chap. 6-7.

Wang An-shih

The older generation of Ancient Style scholars looked at the Classics to find the intentions that had guided the sages in creating civilization. In contrast, Wang An-shih studied them to find the system in what the sages had created, so that it could be done again. He once examined students with this question:

There were root and branch to the sages' ordering of the age. There was what came first and last in their putting it into practice. The problems of the world have been left uncorrected for a long time now; teaching and policy have yet to be made according to the ideas of the sages. We have lost sight of the root, seeking it in the branch; we have taken what should come last and put it first. And thus the world careens toward disorder. Now if it is so that the world will not be ordered except through the means the sages used to achieve order, then to be considered a true shih one must pay attention to how the sages achieved order. I want you gentleman to relate in full the root and branch of how the sages achieved order and what they did first and last.<sup>49</sup>

Moreover he supposed, precisely because that this was a universal and coherent system, that if he had understood it correctly and could express it systematically and coherently in his writing, then it could be applied successfully in policy.<sup>50</sup> For Wang what could be composed in texts could, if it he had gotten it right, also be instituted in life.

An important example of Wang's approach to understanding antiquity is in effect his answer to the question quoted above. This is his "Ten-thousand Word Memorial" of 1058, which

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<sup>49</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 臨川先生文集 (Pei-ching: Chung-hua, 1959) 70.747, third question.

<sup>50</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 77.812. For a similar statement on composing wen that can be applied in the present see 77.811. For its application to institutional reform in 1058 see 39.410-411.

explained that order could only be achieved by creating a system of integrally related institutions.<sup>51</sup> Wang's argument begins from the premise that the key to transforming the present is to enlarge the the pool talent, that is, literati who understand the intentions of the sage kings. The first concern of government must be to increase that pool and to do that it needs an institutionalized program of education. And that in turns requires a series of changes in social, economic, and bureaucratic institutions. In short, reform requires a systematic transformation of the institutional system.

The memorial explains how the parts were necessarily connected in antiquity, but not in the present, and calls for careful planning to implement the required reforms, in the first place with regard to the literati. First there must be education for all through state schools which teach all aspects of the work of government, ethical conduct, and the guiding ideas of the sage kings. Second, there must be an economic system that guarantees that all receive material support and can maintain the way of life appropriate to their station, using punishments to deal with deviance. This will "unify social customs and bring about order." Third, the most talented should be selected through the school system and given probationary duties and titles, thus allowing them to prove their competence by helping teach and support others. Finally, those who proved their competence should be assigned ranks and office commensurate with their talents, and given long tenures unfettered by regulations so that they could develop local projects . In this scheme the divisions between government and society, the political and the cultural, and public and private spheres disappear. Schools, not government offices, become the center of local society and the capital is more important as a place for generating new policy initiatives than as the locus of the emperor and his court. In fact the ruler and dynastic house are largely irrelevant to this vision. In antiquity this

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<sup>51</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 39.410-423. For later restatements see 41.438 and 39.423. The memorial is fully translated in H. R. Williamson, Wang An-shih: A Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty (London: Probsthain, 1935), vol. 1, pp. 48-84.

system included everyone, Wang held, but in the present it would be enough by applying it to the literati (*shih*), and it was toward them primarily that Wang directed his ideas about learning.

Teaching literati how they should learn, Wang explained elsewhere, would unify them and show them their true purpose.<sup>52</sup> The model of antiquity is a society in which those in power and those below had the same standards, worthy men were employed, and those who learned were rewarded.<sup>53</sup>

In writings that circulated prior to his chief councillorship, Wang adopted the typical Ancient Style attitudes toward other ways of thinking about values. He rejected the “non-activist” rulers of early antiquity.<sup>54</sup> He denied that literati needed to pay attention to heaven-and-earth or seek guidance from some inclusive, natural Way.<sup>55</sup> He warned against seeing learning only as self-cultivation, the point of “learning for oneself” was to be capable of guiding others.<sup>56</sup> Nor was it important to attend to issues of what was innate in man.<sup>57</sup> The fact that Chuang-tzu might well be right about things was beside the point, Wang argued, for the goal of the sages was to set common standards that “the average man can meet” and thus to avoid confusion.<sup>58</sup> Wang was looking for what could shared.

But what exactly was it that was going to be shared? Wang, like others who believed that antiquity held lessons that could apply to the present, faced the problem of explaining what it was

<sup>52</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 82.862-63, school inscription for T'ai-p'ing chou from 1066. Cf. 82.858, for the Ch'ien-chou school from 1064-65; 75. 794, letter to Ting Yüan-chen Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi; 72.768, second letter to Wang Shen-fu.

<sup>53</sup> E.g. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 64.682, “Explaining Destiny;” 69.733-737: “On Succeeding,” “Selecting Talent,” “Promoting Worthies,” and “Assigning Responsibilities.”

<sup>54</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 69.731, “On Remote Antiquity.”

<sup>55</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 68.713, “On Lao-tzu.” 72.763, reply to Han Ch'iu-jen

<sup>56</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 68.722-723, “On Yang and Mo.” Cf. 72.766-767, reply to Wang Shen-fu.

<sup>57</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 72.765-766, reply to Kung Shen-fu, 64.679-680, “On Yang [Hsiung] and Mencius.” See also “On Hsing,” “Hsing and Ch'ing,” and “The Origins of Hsing” in 67.715, 68.726-727.

<sup>58</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 68.725-726, “On Chuang-tzu,” second part; Cf. 67.717-718, “Relating the Mean.”

that could be constant through change, how one could find it, and how one could know that he had found it. When Wang asserted that what defined righteousness was not particular models of past righteous men but doing what was right, he faced the question of what other source there was for knowing what was right.<sup>59</sup> The previous generation had continued to speak of parallel tracks, so to speak, of the *wen* of antiquity and the *tao* of antiquity, a sign perhaps that they had not figured out how ideas could be truly dislodged from the form of their expression. Wang wanted to have it both ways. Antiquity would remain an authoritative model but the lesson of antiquity was that those who imitated the behaviors of a true king were doomed never to be true kings themselves, for the true king knew that he had to change with times if he was to equal the ancients.<sup>60</sup> But what was constant if one changed with the times?

If the times are different and he insists upon doing it the same, then what is the same are the traces and what is different is Way.... For a long time the literati of the age have not known that Way cannot be unified [at the level of] traces.... The Ways of the sages and worthies all come from one and the same thing [lit.: one], but if they do not adjust in response to changes in the times they are not worth being called sages and worthies. The sage understands the greater adjustments, the worthy understands the lesser ones.<sup>61</sup>

To be true to the constant way requires change. But if so how could literati grasp the way of sages so as to reach shared conclusions that justified implementing a new institutional agenda and forcing changes in social customs?<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 67.715, "Bravery and Clemency."

<sup>60</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 67.714, "King and Hegemon."

<sup>61</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 69.730-731, "An Official and Recluse."

<sup>62</sup> On the necessity of changing social customs see Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 69.737-8, "On Customs" and "Encouraging Habits."



Wang's resolution to this dilemma was to see the way of the sages as matter of uncovering and instituting a system of relationships that could be maintained over time and accomodate changing circumstances. To learn from antiquity thus meant creating a system that was capable of changing with the times without falling apart. The sages "instituted ritual" systematically in response to changing historical circumstances and the social mores of the day, he argued in "Rituals that are not Ritual."<sup>63</sup> Elsewhere he made a similar point: the systematic institution of ritual is the true meaning of imitating antiquity, not the piecemeal adoption of those ancient rituals that seemed appropriate to the present.<sup>64</sup> For Wang ritual was a coherent system that took into account human needs and instinctive tendencies.<sup>65</sup> Wang took a similar approach to explaining why the Classics as redacted by Confucius could be fundamental to knowledge about how to govern in the present. "The Master was Wiser than Yao and Shun," Wang writes, because Confucius "collected all the affairs of the sages and greatly completed a system for a myriad generations." The Classics thus allowed the observer to see a system develop through cumulative change better than the ancients who had lived through it.<sup>66</sup>

We know something about Wang's method of reading the Classics from his commentary on the Rites of Chou, prefaces to commentaries and scattered writings. In essence, he assumes that the parts of a text are set in a coherent arrangement, in which one part follows necessarily from the other in a relationship of "root and branch" (i.e. one thing is either fundamental to or dependent on the existence of another) or "first and last" (i.e. the logical sequence in a series). The identification of these relationships proves that he has found the meaning or value of the thing in question as part

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<sup>63</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 67.713-714.

<sup>64</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 70.748, sixth question.

<sup>65</sup>. Hsia Chang-pu has argued that after 1068 Wang changed his view of human nature to argue that good values were innate; see "Wang An-shih ssu-hsiang yü Meng-tzu te kuan-hsi," in Chi-nien Ssu-ma Kuang Wang An-shih, p. 315. I read Wang as saying that his position can incorporate a notion of innateness.

<sup>66</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 67.711-712.

of a larger whole. This procedure involves multiple ad hoc connections, based on appeals to common knowledge rather than rigorous logic. The following is from his explanation of the sequence of the first poems in the Book of Songs.

The governance of the king begins in the family. The orderly arrangement in the family is based in the correct [relationship] between husband and wife. The correct [relationship] between husband and wife depends on seeking a noble lady possessed of virtue as consort to pair with the superior man. Therefore [the Chou-nan sequence] begins with "The Ospreys." Now the reason a noble lady is possessed of virtue is that, in the family, her basis is in the affairs of woman's craft-work, therefore this is followed by "The Cloth-plant" ...<sup>67</sup>

Wang's preface to the Songs claims that by imitating the wen of their language the superior man is stimulated; by following the sequence of their Way the sage is completed."<sup>68</sup> Writing about the Change Wang became aware that with his method he was at last able to see the real meaning of the text through its sequence, and disavowed some of his earlier work.<sup>69</sup> He applies this method to the "Great Plan" (Hung-fan) in the Documents, claiming to have broken free of centuries of tradition and found its meaning,<sup>70</sup> and the Rites of Chou.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 66.701. Shimizu Kiyoshi has made this point in his discussion of the "Explanation;" see his "Ō An-seki no 'shu-nan shi ji-kai' ni tsuite," in Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga Toyogaku ronso (Tokyo: Uno Tetsuto sensei hakuju shukuga kinenkai, 1969), pp. 491-510. See also "Explanation of the Airs of the States," Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi pp. 1071-1072, and his discussion of the Songs in the reply to Han Ch'iu-jen, 72.761-762.

<sup>68</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 84.878-879.

<sup>69</sup>. Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 72.764, reply to Han Ch'iu-jen. Wang's "Explanation of the Images in the Change," presents the 64 hexagrams as a coherent sequence teaching the "way of the superior man;" see Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 65.697-700. Cf. 63.668, 63.671, and 66.708.

<sup>70</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 71.759.

<sup>71</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 84.878, preface to the commentary on the Institutes of Chou.

Wang's growing conviction that the discovery of a systematic arrangement into which he could fit all the parts was proof that he had organized things correctly, that the coherence of the arrangement was the grounds for meaning, eventually led him to conclude that the systems he saw in the Classics had grounds beyond the Classics themselves and that the search for systems did not have to be limited to the Classics. It is at this point that Wang lays claim to exactly those grounds he had earlier dismissed: innate qualities and heaven-and-earth. And it is also in this context that we see him using the term *li*, usually translated as pattern or principle, to refer to what was constant through change. He could use different texts to explain each other because in "such learning as mine... their pattern is the same."<sup>72</sup> Writing in 1065 he argues that the most important aspects of the Classics were grounded in the human mind, and thus ineradicable even when Qin burnt the books. "The morality of the Former Kings came from the patterns of hsing-ming and the patterns of hsing-ming came from men's minds. The Songs and Documents could accord with and reach [men's minds], they could not take away what they had and give them what they did not have. Although the Classics were lost, what came from men's minds was still present."<sup>73</sup> This systematicity of things was inherent in the natural order of things and there was a unity of "the completeness of heaven-and-earth and the larger structure of the ancients" which could be achieved through intuitive understanding (*shen*).<sup>74</sup> Wang's Explanations of Characters (Tzu shuo), written to help New Policies schools teach the new commentaries, argued that the particular structure of each character had moral significance for the structure was "based on what is so-of-itself" in spite of the fact that writing was "instituted by men." Writing began with the sages, and although the pool of

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<sup>72</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 74.786, reply to Wu Hsiao-tsung.

<sup>73</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 82.859, for the school at Ch'ien-chou.

<sup>74</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 66.706-7, "On the Great Man."

characters grew and forms and pronunciation changed, the moral significance remained inherent in their structure, once the system was understood, despite changes in script.<sup>75</sup>

Wang did not, however, give up on the Classics. They were the foundation on which a grander system could be built. Toward the end of his life he wrote:

For long the world has not seen the complete Classics. If one were only to read the Classics it would not be enough to know the Classics. I thus read everything, from the hundred schools and various masters to [such medical texts as] the Nan ching and Su wen, the pharmacopoeia and various minor theories, and I inquire of everyone, down to the farmer and the craftswoman. Only then am I able to know the larger structure (ta t'i) of the Classics and be free of doubt. The later ages in which we learn are different from the time of the Former Kings. We must do this if we are fully to know the sages.<sup>76</sup>

He also tried to explain the philosophical grounds for his views. In the essay "On Attaining Unity" he asserts that there is a necessary dialectic between the analysis of phenomena and the spiritual intuition of unity (*shen*).<sup>77</sup> "Now if one cannot get the essence of all the meanings under heaven, then he cannot enter *shen*. [But] if he cannot enter *shen* then he cannot get the essence of all the principles under heaven.... This ought to be as one, but [that the passage] must speak of it in dual

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<sup>75</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 232-3. The Tzu shuo is now lost. Fifty-two entries (some of which may be incomplete) have been collected in K'o Chang-i, Wang An-shih p'ing chuan (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1933) pp. 242-247. Examples of his method are in his commentary on the Lao tzu and the Chou kuan hsin i. Winston Lo has written on the importance of this work in Wang's thought; see his "Wang An-shih and the Confucian Ideal of Inner Sageliness," Philosophy East and West 26.1 (1976): 41-53, and "Philology, An Aspect of Sung Rationalism," Chinese Culture 17 (1976): 1-26. See Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 84.879 for Wang's preface.

<sup>76</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 73.779.

<sup>77</sup> Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 66.708. Winston Lo in "Wang An-shih and the Confucian Ideal of Inner Sageliness," Philosophy East and West 26.1 (1976): 41-53. and K'o Ch'ang-i, Wang An-shih p'ing-chuan (Shanghai: Shang-wu, 1933), pp. 194-196.

terms is simply because it is speaking about their sequence."<sup>78</sup> The sage can do both. The essay opens with what I take to be a straightforward claim for coherence as the test of meaning.

All of the ten-thousand things have an ultimate pattern (*chih-li*) to them. If one can get the essence of their pattern he is a sage. The way of getting the essence of their pattern lies simply in attaining their unity. If one attains their unity then all things under heaven can be apprehended without calculation. The Change says, "Unity attained yet a hundred considerations."<sup>79</sup> It is speaking of the hundred considerations all reverting to unity. If one is able to attain unity and get the essence of all patterns under heaven then he can enter shen. Once he has entered shen then [he has reached] the ultimate of the Way. Now when thus, he is at a moment of "no thought, no action, tranquil and unmoving."<sup>80</sup> However, there are certainly affairs under heaven that can be thought about and acted on, thus he must "comprehend their causes."<sup>81</sup> This is why the sage also values being able to "attain practice."<sup>82</sup>

Attaining unity, seeing how things form a coherent whole, guarantees that one has determined the pattern for the things in question.

Wang's learning led him to see the possibility of integrating "all under heaven" into a dynamic system, a grand enterprise that the dynastic house should support. When he became chief councilor he told the emperor: "I certainly wish to aid Your Majesty in accomplishing something (yu wei), but today customs and institutions are all in ruin....If Your Majesty truly wishes to use me...we should first discuss learning so that you are convinced of the necessary connections in

<sup>78</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 66.708.

<sup>79</sup>. Chou I yin-te 周易引得 (Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series. Rpt. Taipei: Ch'eng-wen, 1966), Hsi-tz'u chuan B3.

<sup>80</sup>. Chou i, Hsi-tz'u chuan A9.

<sup>81</sup>. Chou i, Hsi-tz'u chuan B3.

<sup>82</sup>. Wang An-shih, Lin-ch'uan hsien-sheng wen-chi 66.707.

what I have learned." And, in response to the emperor's comment that some believed Wang's learning had not prepared him for practical leadership: "Methods from the Classics (ching shu) are the means for correcting the problems of the age (ching shih-wu)....The priority of the moment is to change customs (pien feng-su) and establish institutions (li fa-tu)."<sup>83</sup>

### Ssu-ma Kuang

Ssu-ma Kuang was a conservative in that he thought changed established relationships between state and society would ultimately destroy the whole. Like Wang An-shih he was known for Ancient Style writings in his youth, and although he opposed the Ch'ing-li reformers he shared their doubts about seeking guidance from heaven-and-earth or innate qualities. His version of antiquity made it continuous with later history: the hallmarks of the civilization that resulted from the sage kings' effort to transform humanity from its original animal state were hierarchical order and property rights, moral instruction and penal law.<sup>84</sup> For Ssu-ma the structure of government was fundamentally correct and true to its original foundation; the problem was that people did not understand how to make it function correctly.<sup>85</sup>

Ssu-ma Kuang set out to correct this as an official, when as a policy critic at court he unleashed a flood of memorials about what was needed to make the political structure function effectively, and as a scholar, when he set out to demonstrate that his views were proven by history and, ultimately, were in accord with heaven-and-earth and had a place for internal cultivation. In Ssu-ma's scheme of things a polity that was properly maintained should survive forever. His analogy was to a building: the populace was the foundation, the court the beams, the bureaucracy

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<sup>83</sup>. Hsü tzu-chih ch'ang-pien shih-i 4.3b, in Li T'ao, Hsü tzu-chih t'ung-chien ch'ang-pien.

<sup>84</sup>. Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 71.871.

<sup>85</sup>. Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 71.872, inscription for the temple to Confucius in Wen-hsi hsien.

the roof, ritual and law its pillars, the generals its walls, and the armies its lock. This was a static structure, not a dynamic system, and it required that all the members play their assigned roles, and that the ruler as owner, if wished to pass it on to his descendants, be a good manager. Ssu-ma was generous but repetitive in his advice to the emperors he served. They had three tasks: to assign officials according to competence, to reward achievement, and to punish failure. They also needed to care about the well being of those who served them, have an understanding of what was right, and be immune from self-serving suasion. Society could survive for a while even when government went wrong because humans were by nature resistant to change, Ssu-ma argued, and thus it was of utmost importance to habituate the populace to behaving in a manner that would preserve order. For Ssu-ma the roles of superior and inferior were the foundation of order, something that he thought had nearly been lost over the course of history, although the Sung founders were on the right track in their attempt to centralize authority.<sup>86</sup> What Ssu-ma would most object to in the New Policies was that they brought about social change.

Wang An-shih had called for a new integrated understanding of the Classics. Ssu-ma Kuang's vehicle was history. Beginning in the early 1060s he set out to give a systematic understanding of history and its lessons. The lost Chronological Charts (Li-nien t'u) covered the 1362 years from 403 B.C. to A.D. 959.<sup>87</sup> The Charts became the outline for the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government (Tzu-chih t'ung-chien), which Ssu-ma compiled with the help of Liu Pin (1023-1089), Liu Shu (1032-1078), and Fan Tsu-yü (1041-1098).<sup>88</sup> Ssu-ma submitted the first section in 1066 with the title Comprehensive Treatise (T'ung-chih), in eight *chüan*, covering the

<sup>86</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 219-22.

<sup>87</sup> Ssu-ma included the chronological summary of political events from the Charts in the Record of Examining the Past (Chi-ku lu), which is extant; see Chi-ku lu 11.63b-15.39a.

<sup>88</sup> For a discussion of Ssu-ma's methods see E. G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang," in Historians of China and Japan, eds. W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 151-166, and Wang Te-i, "Ssu-ma Kuang yü Tzu-chih t'ung-chien," in Wang Te-i, Sung-shih yen-chiu lun-chi, second collection (Taipei: Ting-wen, 1972), pp. 1-24.

years 403 to 207 B.C. On the basis of this the court agreed to fund the longer work we now know as the Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government, in 294 *chüan*, covering 403 B.C.-A.D. 959. The Mirror was finally submitted in 1084, together with an "Examination of Discrepancies" and a "Table of Contents," each in thirty *chüan*. His Record of Examining the Past (Chi-ku lu) submitted in 1086 in 20 *chüan* included a section on political events between 960 and 1067 and a review of the period from the first sage king Fu Hsi through 402 B.C.<sup>89</sup> These works were recognized by the court as official works, although Su-ma had independent editorial control.<sup>90</sup>

Ssu-ma rejected traditional efforts to define a succession of dynasties as legitimate possessors of heaven's mandate in accord with the Five Phases, and instead held that dynasties were the result of struggles for power.<sup>91</sup> The point of his historiography was to show that there was a consistent and necessary set of factors according to which polities rose and fell, thus disproving those who argued that and the government could remake society. He writes in the introduction to the Chronological Charts that "The way of order and disorder is threaded by consistency (*i-kuan*) through past and present."<sup>92</sup> Similarly in submitting the Comprehensive Treatise in 1066, he asserts that "The sources of order and disorder have the same normative structure (*t'i*) in past and present."<sup>93</sup> All the outcomes in the past, for all their variations and particularities, were explained by the same set of principles. "From the beginning of man to the end of heaven-and-earth," he writes in the Record of Examining the Past, "for those who possess the state, although there are

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<sup>89</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Chi-ku lu 稽古錄 (SPTK).

<sup>90</sup> Ssu-ma also produced a "private" historical work on Sung history, the Su-shui chi-wen in sixteen *chüan* (Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1970).

<sup>91</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 資治通鑑 (Pei-ching: Ku-chi, 1956), 69.2185-2188. The rejection of legitimate succession is found in Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 69.2185-88.

<sup>92</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Chi-ku lu 16.83a.

<sup>93</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 司馬文正公傳家集 (Wan-yu wen-k'u ed.) 17.254.



myriad kinds of variations, they do not go beyond these."<sup>94</sup> Thus Ssu-ma Kuang had also found something that he believed was constant through change and could be understood by others through learning.

Just as Wang's Classical curriculum was intended to train students to think in a certain way, one that supported the New Policies, Ssu-ma's historical works were meant to be inculcate a way of thinking that justified his position. And like Wang's curriculum his works taught readers what to look for and how to evaluate it. His histories were "mirrors" on the present by providing rulers and ministers with an historical perspective on their own moment, so that they could see the implications and consequences of their choices under the circumstances. The Chronological Charts, for example, notes the moments when it was still possible to change the outcome and the moments at which the dynasty could no longer be saved.<sup>95</sup> He showed the literati how to save the state, but he also provided them the means to know when to give up on it.

The Comprehensive Mirror, the greatest of all his works, was a history, a primer for learning to think about the polity, and an account of the lessons history taught.<sup>96</sup> It was composed entirely through the compilation of passages from other texts, with separate notes justifying choices when alternative versions were available, with the exception of almost two-hundred quotations from earlier writers and Ssu-ma himself which were meant to draw attention to the important lessons from history. What did Ssu-ma mean?<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Chi-ku lu 16.86a-86b.

<sup>95</sup> Examples include the discussion of Eastern Han, Chi-ku lu 13.112a-113b; Northern Wei, 14.26a-28a; Sui, 14.37a-8a; and T'ang, 15.68a-72b. On history as analogy see Robert Hartwell, "Historical Analogism, Public Policy, and Social Science in Eleventh and Twelfth Century China," American Historical Review (1971), pp. 690-727.

<sup>96</sup> For a discussion of Ssu-ma's methods see E. G. Pulleyblank, "Chinese Historical Criticism: Liu Chih-chi and Ssu-ma Kuang," in Historians of China and Japan, eds. W. G. Beasley and E. G. Pulleyblank (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 151-166.

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the Tzu-chih t'ung-chien: A Survey," Monumenta Serica 31 (1974-75): 1-38.

Beginning with his all-important opening analysis of the division of Chin into three states in 403 B.C., the Mirror sets out Ssu-ma's vision of the normative order of the polity: a unified hierarchy of political authority. The ruler chooses and delegates authority to his court ministers, they choose and delegate to the level below them. All the way down to the common people everyone exists in a relationship between superior and inferior. The superior leads, the inferior carries out his duties. If this structure is maintained then the state survives, when it is lost it perishes. In this regard there no real distinction between a moral "true king" and hegemon, between civilized and barbarian polities, all stand or fall according to this. In fact this basic principle of hierarchical authority, the core meaning of "ritual," is in some sense more important than any particular polity. The "roles of superior and subordinate" are unequal. The ruler can dismiss his ministers for not performing, but ministers cannot dismiss their ruler. Rather, they must try to correct his mind by explaining the larger structure to him so that he can clearly perceive what is right and wrong. The ruler is responsible – if the Mirror shows anything it is that bad rulers have dominated history – but ministers must be guided by principles. Like the sages, they must be able to detect and thwart at an incipient stage the kinds of change which will threaten the structure if allowed to go unchecked. However diminished the ruler's authority maybe, if he authorizes policies which undermine this hierarchy he is in fact destroying it himself. Ssu-ma begins the Mirror in 403 B.C. with the king of Chou's granting the request of the three powerful lords of Chin to divide Chin among them precisely because he sees this at the moment that the Chou was lost, because by authorizing the division the king abrogated his own responsibility and precluded the possibility that others would defend the dynasty (for to do so would have required disobeying his commands). Morally responsible action maintains the

received forms of conduct for it precisely behavior that contravenes the forms that represent the established order that initiates its demise.<sup>98</sup>

Ssu-ma was not a champion of autocratic rule or of blind loyalty to the ruler. The first loyalty of all must be to the structure of authority that makes a polity viable; all else follows from this.<sup>99</sup> It is, as his memorials make clear, a deeply conservative point of view, one which is unsympathetic to all those forces of change which he saw around him. He buttressed his views in other ways as well. Although at the start of career he had been hostile to efforts to find grounds for principles in heaven-and-earth and human internality, the Mirror has several passages which reflect an interest in showing that a correct understanding of heaven-and-earth and the mind support his conclusions.<sup>100</sup> In the Change, for example, he saw proof of a systematic parity between heaven and man and a parallel between the moral principles and numerology, all of which he believed supported his view of hierarchy.<sup>101</sup> He composed a numerological-cosmological treatise of his own, the Hidden Void (Ch'ien-hsü), in imitation Yang Hsiung's Supreme Mystery, a work he believed had shown that the principles of heaven-and-earth and the polity were the same.<sup>102</sup>

In retirement in Loyang (1071-1085) Ssu-ma Kuang was the leader of the conservative opposition to the New Policies. It is possible that Ssu-ma's friendships with Shao Yung, the Ch'eng brothers, and others in Loyang persuaded him to extend the boundaries of his claims to include

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<sup>98</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 237-46.

<sup>99</sup> Anthony Sariti, "Monarchy, Bureaucracy, and Absolutism in the Political Thought of Ssu-ma Kuang," Journal of Asian Studies 32.1 (1972): 53-76. He takes issue with Hsiao Kung-ch'üan's interpretation of Ssu-ma Kuang's political thought in Hsiao Kung-ch'üan 蕭公權, Chung-kuo cheng-chih ssu-hsiang shih 中國政治思想史, vol. 4 (Rpt. Taipei: Chung-hua wen-hua, 1964). Ming K. Chan, "The Historiography of the Tzu-chih t'ung-chien," is closer to Hsiao.

<sup>100</sup> For example, Ssu-ma Kuang, Tzu-chih t'ung-chien 291.9510-9513 and 192.6051-6053.

<sup>101</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, I Shuo 易說 (SKCS); see his introduction.

<sup>102</sup> Ssu-ma Kuang, Ch'ien-hsü 潛虛 (SPTK).

heaven-and-earth.<sup>103</sup> It may also help explain Ssu-ma's growing interest in the mind and in internal cultivation. "The lesser man orders the traces," Ssu-ma wrote in 1083, "the superior man orders the mind."<sup>104</sup> But his view of the internal was not that of the Ch'engs. To be ethical meant to accept one's lot: talent was given by heaven and success was fate, one should not think there was a way to guarantee personal success.<sup>105</sup> Personal cultivation was aimed at achieving a state where one would not be distracted by the enticements of social reward (or punishment) but would stick to practicing his tao and according with ritual.<sup>106</sup> He took an interest in the Doctrine of the Mean but at the same time denied that there was any "innate knowledge from heaven." Mental cultivation meant training oneself to "go neither too far nor not far enough" in thought and action. The mind was to be kept free of outside influences, for Ssu-ma the "Great Learning's" ko-wu (Ch'eng I's "investigating things") meant "restraining things."<sup>107</sup> Although he later said he found Hsün-tzu too narrow, he in fact continued to share his view that human nature was not good, one should learn and stick to ritual; and he wrote a small work Doubting Mencius, because Mencius encouraged the overthrow of hierarchy.<sup>108</sup>

Ssu-ma was unsympathetic to all those forces of change which he saw around him. He believed that commercial growth encouraged social change among the populace, he saw no need for creating more literati: his ideal reform of the examination system was one in which admission

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<sup>103</sup>. For an account of Lo-yang as a capital of the intellectual opposition to the New Policies see Michael D. Freeman, "Loyang and the Opposition to Wang An-shih: The Rise of Confucian Conservatism, 1068-1086" (Diss. Yale University, 1973; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms).

<sup>104</sup>. Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 74.910;C Note that Ssu-ma's new title in 1085 for his memorial on the emperor's duties as ruler, "The essentials of cultivating the mind and ordering the state," did not involve a change in content.

<sup>105</sup>. See for example, "Standards for Shih" from 1057 and "Heaven and Man" from 1074 and 1085 in Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 74.906-907, 74.916.

<sup>106</sup>. Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 74.912-913, "Seeking to be Used" in the Foolish Writings.

<sup>107</sup>. Ssu-ma Kuang, Ssu-ma Wen-cheng kung ch'üan-chia chi 65.808-809, "Attaining Knowledge Lies in Restraining Things."

<sup>108</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 234-36.

would be based on the number of recommendation letters one was able to obtain from court officials. Yet he shared with Wang An-shih a conviction that there was a totalistic and universal approach to governing human society. This was not a return to the Han and T'ang empires, neither of which lived up to Ssu-ma's standards, or to a grand imperial vision, he opposed an aggressive foreign policy and called for coexistence with foreign states and would later conclude that it was the desire for empire that had beguiled the emperor into supporting the radical attempt to transform society through the New Policies.<sup>109</sup>

*The Literary Defense of Judgment and Circumstance*

Su Shih once commented that Wang An-shih's own writing was not bad at all, it was just that he wanted to make every else be the same as himself.<sup>110</sup> From Su's perspective Wang's writings were one man's opinion and revealed something of the quality of the man, but they were not a blueprint all should or could follow. Han Yu seems to have taken a similar attitude towards expressing his own ideas, they were not meant to be things for others to imitate. Although the Ancient Style position could lead to dogmatism, it was the creation of literary intellectuals and it had a defensible literary rationale: those who had grasped the values that had guided the ancients with their minds and whose style had been transformed through their encounter with the ancients could stand independently and respond to the events of the world through the lens of their own learning and writing. Having shown they could do it through writing they could be trusted to do it through government. The values that guided the sages would be the values that guided their writing and behavior. This implied a government led by men who were guided by a shared commitment to understand the Way and were trying to serve the common good and deal with

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<sup>109</sup> Bol, Peter K. "Government, Society, and State: On the Political Visions of Ssu-ma Kuang and Wang An-shih" *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 177-81.

<sup>110</sup> Su Shih, *Su Tung-po chi* (Kuo-hsüeh chi-pen tsung-shu ed.) 30.11.

problems in a timely manner, rather than government by dogma and program. It implied further a view of political culture as something that was constantly being created and transformed by those who participated in it, rather than seeing the participants as subordinating themselves to the demands of the political system.

In the years after the Ch'ing-li reform the person who most persuasively defended this point of view was Ou-yang Hsiu. Ou-yang had a broad interest in antiquity, history, and literature. He was a “culturalist” rather than Classicist or historian, for whom the actualities of human experience were of more compelling interest than the search for a system.<sup>111</sup> Although he had first made his name as a propagandist for reform, in the 1050s Ou-yang produced two works which spoke went counter to the search for universal systems such as found in Wang An-shih and Ssu-ma Kuang.

The Original Meaning of the Songs, is an analysis of how the Book of Songs came to be and a commentary.<sup>112</sup> Ou-yang argues that access to what is “original” in the Songs is mediated by the processes of collecting and editing that took place later, and that it is only by understanding this layered process that his times can espy the sensibility of the actual poets. The poems themselves were simply individuals’ unselfconscious emotional responses to events without a moral agenda or hidden meaning. Then, second, the poems were collected, classified, ranked, and stored for use on the proper occasion. The third stage was Confucius’ editing of the poems. Living in a corrupted world he found in them as a means of showing what morally

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<sup>111</sup> On Ou-yang see, for example, Ronald Egan, The Literary Works of Ou-Yang Hsiu (1007-72) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). Tsuchida Kenjiro 土田 健次郎, “Oyô Shu shiron” 歐陽修試論 理・人情・自然・簡易. James T. C. Liu, Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh Century Neo-Confucianist (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

<sup>112</sup> For a discussion of this text in the tradition of Songs exegesis see Steven van Zoeren, Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

correct responses ought to be. Thus the naïve poetry of antiquity came to be a vehicle for morality. The fourth and final stage was the appearance of the exegetical tradition, which tried to reconstruct the Classic after its burning in the Ch'in and tried to infer the intent of the poets from the arrangement of the poems (as Wang An-shih did). Ou-yang uses his understanding of the genesis of the Classic to revise and emend the exegetical tradition, while stressing that grasping the intentions of the poets requires understanding the sensibility with which they responded to affairs rather than the application of a method. The purpose of the sage Confucius in this case was not to reveal universal principles or a system, but to help later men to become morally attuned by putting themselves in the place of others.<sup>113</sup> This is a way of thinking about culture generally: there was an original moment, but the layers of texts have created different levels of meaning in what has become a cumulative story, all of it can be appreciated.

For Ou-yang it was possible to appreciate the ancients but not to be exactly like them, precisely because the appreciation was occasioned by a sense of difference. While the ancients simply were as they were, unaware of anything but their personal likes and dislikes, modern man carries the burden of self-consciousness. In his introduction to the “Treatise on Rituals and Music” in the New History of T'ang, Ou-yang put the problem like this: the “unity” of antiquity stemmed from the fact that all aspects of political, social, cultural, and economic life were all aspects of a ritual system. There was no difference between how people lived and how they ought to live, so it was not possible for people to have a sense that they were being moved toward the good or that there were any moral rules other than convention. Later history “comes from duality,” as Ou-yang Hsiu puts it, meaning that the work of government and the effort to tell people how to behave became two distinct enterprises. Once again it is not possible to recreate the ancient situation, precisely because modern times starts from a distinction between

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<sup>113</sup> Bol, “This Culture of Ours”, pp. 198-201.

the political and the moral that the ancients did not possess. The question, which Ou-yang answers through the various treatises of the New History, is how to live in a world of duality. One cannot return to the forms of ancient institutions, but one can see how they have evolved over time and ask how the forms and purposes of institutions have changed. One can see that it is important to try to bring politics and morality together, but this will not be achieved by a systematic change or by keeping things from changing. Instead, literati must figure out what can be changed under the circumstance and in doing this they must look beyond the immediate institutional interests of government to the general interest of all.<sup>114</sup>

After Ou-yang Hsiu himself the best known defenders of his sensibility were the three Su's, Su Hsün (1009-1066) and his sons Shih (1037-1101) and Ch'e (1039-1112). Su Hsün also denied that the ancient could be restored. Time was historical, the future was open but the choices that could be made were contingent on the circumstances that earlier actions had created. Each age in antiquity had its overarching value, Su opined, but one could not go back to the beginning and start all over again. His age needed to find something new to hold it all together. At the same time Su Hsün wrote at length on how a minimal application of power could be used to redirect the inertia of events (*shih* 勢). This he called *ch'üan* (權), not so much in its sense of being at variance with the norm (it is often translated as the expedient as opposed to the constant) but in the original sense of a steelyard, where the weight of an object could be balanced by a small adjustment of steelyard counterweight before it built up such inertia that the weighed object would plummet and the situation fall out of control. The values Su was interested in were those which bore on how the individual could stay in control of events, which in turn implied an understanding of how events unfolded and at what points one could redirect their course. It was

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<sup>114</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 194-98.



possible, thus, for Su to envision a sage who would have a comprehensive perspective on the present and could guide it into a new era.<sup>115</sup>

The fifty essays Su Shih submitted, with Ou-yang's recommendation, for the prestigious decree examination of 1061, read as a synthesis of all the trends we have noted to this point, yet ultimately Su returns to Ou-yang's position. The essays combine a program for activism, institutional reform in government and the transformation of society, with a criticism of dogmatic interpretations of the way of the sages. He subscribes to the organic metaphor: the polity is like a body and keeping it healthy requires maintaining circulation and allowing the new to replace the old, but without requiring uniformity. He agrees on the importance of distinguishing roles and limiting government interference (government should create situations in which people will find it easy to do what is ultimately in their interest) but allows for social change and downplays hierarchical authority. He asserts that his views are based on an understanding of the natural patterns (*li*) of the myriad things but he also insists that they are true to human actualities and emotions (*jen-ch'ing*). His model is Confucius who, on the one hand, "threads it all on a single strand" (*i-kuan*) and understands how all the patterns are tied together in a single whole and, on the other hand, always acts appropriately to the moment. But throughout this account is an acceptance of the two-sidedness of the dualisms, of the world. The "practice of the equilibrium" (*chung-yung*), Su argues, is to recognize that in reality there are always two sides to everything and that one should strive to maintain a productive balance. Rather than trying to find one unchanging set of political and moral values – which necessarily will be one-sided and if followed absolutely will ultimately be self-destructive – the only truly

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<sup>115</sup> George Hatch, "Su Hsün's Pragmatic Statecraft" Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 59-75. See also. George C. Hatch, Jr., "The Thought of Su Hsün (1009-1066): An Essay on the Social Meaning of Intellectual Pluralism in Northern Sung" (Ph. D. diss. University of Washington University of Washington, 1978).

universal way is to act according to one's judgment of the situation and, when circumstances call for it, add to support the weaker side in order to create a balance. The middle or center, the point of equilibrium, is created by leaning first to one side and then to the other, it cannot be permanently fixed. As an example Su uses the polarity between acting according to institutional procedures versus reliance on individual initiative and judgment, or "law and man" (*jen* and *fa*), to argue that unless greater space is given to individual initiative the institutions of the day will become impediments to the purposes they were created to realize, but to allow people to do as they please is equally dangerous. Thus, in the case of the general population for example, the solution is to establish institutions such as the clan system, that will enable them to rely on themselves for mutual benefit. Human actualities are such that, given the means, they will spontaneously tend to support each other because they will see it is in their own interest. In the end the way of the sage, even though ultimately it is beyond definition, must be something that will lead to things that work for everyone and thus the way of the sage must always be true to human actualities and interests.<sup>116</sup> Although Su Shih's mature ideas go far beyond this, we see already the attitudes with which Su would oppose Wang An-shih and the New Policies a decade later: an aversion to efforts to force uniformity on literati learning and to force society and the economy to conform to state imposed institutions. Yet for all Su Shih's unhappiness with dogma, in these essays he wants to argue that he can see the whole, can analyze the dynamic of events, and has a method for responding so as to reestablish a state of equilibrium.

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<sup>116</sup> For interpretations of these essays see Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 259-69, and Ronald C. Egan, Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shih (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994), pp. 3-26.

*Cosmology and Ethics*

Although many Ancient Style intellectuals attacked the that there was a necessary connection between heaven-and-earth and the human work of governing and creating culture, there were still scholars who believed that the natural order was the foundation for society. During the course of the eleventh century, however, they largely abandoned two traditional models for making the connection between “heaven and humanity.” The first, which had been part of the Tang founding was that the sage kings had based civilization on the patterns of heaven-and-earth and that the Classics gave an account of what they had accomplished. In principle because there was only one cosmos there could be only one political order that corresponded to it, and since there was a record of that original order any dynasty that wanted to achieve greatness needed to working within the framework set out by the Classics. In effect this justified the Classics and the authority of unified empires as the sociocultural equivalent of the natural order. The second model, not incompatible with the first, was “cosmic resonance theory.” This held that the *ch’i* (the matter and energy or material force that constituted all things) in the realm of human activity and the *ch’i* of the cosmos resonated. Human actions, particularly those at court, that contravened the harmonious and constant order of the cosmos could throw the cosmos off course, with dire consequences for agricultural life and the polity as a result. Human behavior was the egocentric variable and heaven-and-earth was the constant foundation. Here too the Classics were supposed to guide humans in their roles.

Ancient Style writers could deny these connections, but all of them either tried to show that common notions about heaven-and-earth fit their ideas (Wang and Ssu-ma) or challenged the need to make a connection to the cosmos (Ou-yang Hsiu). The fact that practically every major intellectual figure wrote on the Book of Change, the one Classic that claimed to connect

man and cosmos, suggests how important it was to figure out what to do with the cosmos and how uneasy literati were with the idea that politics and morality might not have an absolute foundation.

Those literati who were most successful in persuading others that the cosmos provided a real foundation for politics and morality were those scholars who turned to the sages as sources for ideas for transforming individuals and then society. Their ultimate achievement was to make a connection between the processes through which heaven-and-earth brought the myriad things into being and the individual in such a way that they could explain what it meant to be a sage and seriously hold out the prospect that people in the present could be sages themselves. They moved what had once been the cosmic foundation for the political system and its culture into the self, where it became the grounds for personal morality and autonomy. This radical departure from traditional cosmology shared with the Ancient Style intellectuals – whom they accused of being more concerned with culture than morality – a belief that their age could free itself from the legacies of the imperial past and mark a new beginning.

### Chou Tun-i

An example of this is Chou Tun-i (1017-1077), a local official who had entered office through the protection privilege and who as a provincial teacher briefly taught the Ch'eng brothers. His Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate would later become a key Neo-Confucian text, with the “supreme ultimate” being understood as the unity of all principles (*li*); read in a mid-eleventh century context it makes better sense as an assertion that humankind, morality, and the sages were the outcomes of the process of creation itself. In Chou's eyes the sages neither modeled institutions on heaven-and-earth as in traditional cosmology nor created

things to satisfy human needs and wants as Ancient Style writers assumed. Rather the sages were men who were in perfect correspondence with the natural order and who by maintaining a state of tranquility that kept them in correspondence established themselves as the ultimate standard for humanity. To be moral was to cultivate what the sages had cultivated, taking benevolence and righteousness, the equivalent of *yin* and *yang*, as the two main guides.<sup>117</sup> Chou's

Comprehending the Change is continuous with this point of view but expands the topic from the sage as the ultimate standard (sections 1-10) to address government (11-19), learning (20-30), and other matters (31-40).<sup>118</sup> It ends with what I take to be an imputation that Chou Tun-i as teacher is functioning as a latter day Confucius (38-40). Together these two texts offer an alternative to the meaning Ancient Style reformers attached to the Classics, antiquity, and the way of the sages.

What makes Chou's sage in Comprehending the Change different from the political models, and gives him the ability to serve as a guide to learning, morality, and politics, is the idea that the sage is a person who has fully realized something that he has innately. What he has innately is something all people possess, namely something that is of the creative, life-continuing process of heaven-and-earth. Chou calls this *ch'eng* 誠 (variously translated as sincerity, authenticity, or integrity); it is the innate foundation of the virtues and it is constantly present when one is in a tranquil non-acting state. As such it functions as an innate guide in that it

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<sup>117</sup> Chou Tun-i 周敦頤 Chou Lien-hsi hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi 周濂溪先生全集 (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng) 1.2. Translated and discussed by Joseph Adler in de Bary, William Theodore, and Irene Bloom, Sources of Chinese Tradition, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), vol. I, pp. 669-76. Also consulting Hou Wai-lu, Ch'iu Han-sheng, and Chang K'ai-chih 侯外廬邱漢生張豈之, ed., Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih 宋明理學史, (Pei-ching: Jen-min, 1984), pp. 49-63.

<sup>118</sup> Chou Tun-i, Chou Lien-hsi hsien-sheng ch'üan-chi. Translated in Wing-tsit Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 465-80. Also see Hou et al., Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih, pp. 68-80.

defines a moral purpose for the individual (i.e. to continue life). Zhou seems to have wanted to argue that the sage was born with perfect faculties and knowledge. His sages recognizes the contingency of historical events but has an intuitive ability to understand the course of development of events and he spontaneously deploys the virtues appropriate to the circumstances to ensure good outcomes (i.e. outcomes that ensure that life continues). If normal humans are not sages they should still seek to emulate the sage.

From his vision of the sage Chou envisions an ideal ruler, who molds his subjects into an harmonious society, just as heaven creates an harmonious natural order. To transform the people rulers should improve themselves, employ the talented, and institute rituals and music. Chou is particularly concerned with the music, which he thinks the sages used to calm the populace and satisfy their desires but which in modern times stimulates desire. What does all this mean for literati learning? One should learn to be a sage by maintaining a state of emptiness, disinterestedness, and freedom from desire, without worrying about social and political success. Literary composition is only of value if it is being used to convey the way of the sage. In effect Chou has defined learning as learning to achieve a certain state of mind. Attaining a state of tranquility is more valuable than wealth and honor.

Although Chou seems not to have been influential in his own times, he has made an important claim that will become part of Neo-Confucianism: the foundation for morality is in the universe and in the self; it is that which makes possible the continuing of life itself; and the point of learning is to cultivate the ability to continue the process.

## Shao Yung

Shao Yung (1011-1077) shared the basic idea that heaven-and-earth generated humans as part of creation and by doing so gave them the ability to fulfill their roles as part of creation. Like Chou Tun-yi (and Chang Tsai below) Shao thought he could figure out how this was possible, but instead of positing an inherent foundation in the individual Shao found the solution in a system for analyzing the natural order and human politics, society, and culture. Understanding the system will enable literati to determine how to transform society under any circumstances, since all possible circumstances can be fit into Shao's system.

Shao settled in Loyang in 1048. He eventually came in contact with the Ch'eng brothers, Ssu-ma Kuang, and other resident conservative scholars and officials. Shao's Supreme Principles Governing the World (Huang chi ching shih shu) no longer exists in its original form. Chu Hsi adopted some of Shao's charts as schemata of the "learning of what is prior to heaven" (*hsien tian* 先天), that is, the cosmological process upon which creation is based. Recent studies have traced Shao's life and thought have drawn on his oral teachings and poetry as well.<sup>119</sup> The comments that follow are based on the twelve part Inner Chapters on Observing Things (Kuan wu nei-p'ien), a relatively succinct and methodologically consistent work found in the Supreme Principles, which is accepted as being from Shao Yung's own hand.<sup>120</sup> Yin Tun, a disciple of the Ch'engs, once commented that although his contemporaries saw Shao as contributing to the

<sup>119</sup> Don J. Wyatt, The Recluse of Loyang: Shao Yung and the Moral Evolution of Early Sung Thought (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996) and Ann Birdwhistell, Transition to Neo-Confucianism: Shao Yung on Knowledge and Symbols of Reality (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989). On Shao and the Change see, Kidder Smith and Don J. Wyatt, "Shao Yung and Number," in Sung Uses of the I Ching (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 100-135.

<sup>120</sup> Shao Yung's son, Shao Po-wen (1057-1134) says the original text had twelve chapters devoted to establishing numerical correspondences between cycles of time and human events, between the numbers of yin and yang and music and the myriad things. The last two chapters, possibly the "inner chapters" discussed here, Shao Po-wen described as being about how the book was done. See Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih, p. 184-5.

study of the Change what he basically offered was “learning for ordering the world,”<sup>121</sup> an observation that fits Shao’s title and the content of the “Inner Chapters.”

Shao’s “method” was to categorize all phenomena using four-member sets, based on the cycles of major or rising (*tai*) and minor or falling (*shao*) phases of *yin* and *yang* in Heaven

Heaven			
Yang		Yin	
t’ai-yang	shao-yang	t’ai-yin	shao-yin

And the corresponding *kang* and *jou* on earth

Earth			
Kang		Jou	
t’ai- kang	shao- kang	t’ai- jou	shao-jou

Shao explains that Heaven and Earth give rise to the “myriad things” through a process of generation, interaction, and multiplication. The four aspects of yin-yang and kang-jou produce the structuring elements of heaven (Sun, Moon, Planets, Stars) and of earth (Water, Fire, Soil, Stone). The two sets in turn produce climate and weather (e.g. sun changes into warmth...water transforms into rain...), which through their interaction realize all the possible permutations of heaven and earth. The two climate and weather sets affect corresponding elements of the myriad things as follows:

Warmth	Cold	Day	Night
<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>
Nature	Emotions	Form	Structure

Rain	Wind	Dew	Thunder
<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>	<i>affects</i>
Walkers	Flyers	Plants	Trees

<sup>121</sup> Cited in Hou Wai-lu et al., Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih, p. 204



Depending upon what Shao wants to demonstrate he can also “multiply” two sets with each other to create a grid of sixteen possibilities (or even one set against itself). In some instances he multiplies the rows against columns and columns against rows to create 32 possibilities (e.g. natureXwalkers=nature of walkers/walkers of nature). He also employs cumulative multiplication, as in the case of the numbers of the four cycles of time, which he gives both as names (the complete cycle is named yüan-yüan and its division into generations is shih-shih) and numbers (1 and 18, 662,400).

	Yüan 1	Hui 1x12	Yün 1x12x30=360	Shih 1x12x30x12=4320
Yüan 1	yüan-yüan 1x1	12x1	360x1	4320x1
Hui 12	1x12	12x12=144	360x12=4320	4320x12=51840
Yün 30	1x360	12x360=4320	360x360=129600	4320x360=1555200
Shih 12	1x4320	12x4320=51840	360x4320=1555200	4320x4320=18662400 shih-shih

Other sets of four include the Classics, seasons, organs of perception, types of talent, virtues, concepts, ways of ruling, kinds of rulers, ways of transforming others, and occupational categories. For Shao the coherence of his system trumped accommodating received understandings of the cosmos, such as the Five Phases, and of culture, such as the Five Classics.

Rather than reproducing Shao’s sets and manipulations for each of the twelve sections of Inner Chapters on Observing Things it must suffice to note his general theme and various

arguments.<sup>122</sup> Throughout Shao focuses on the whole that can include all the parts and aims to show how this standpoint enables one to see where he is in the scheme of things and improve his position. He begins by arguing that what makes the human different from all the rest of the myriad things is that the human alone has the ability to be stimulated by everything and responsive to all other things. All other things have been apportioned limited allotments and abilities, but the human is without limits for he can employ all the four senses (Section 1). The sage is to the common person as the human is to other things: the sage is the most perfect of humans and is able to perceive everything that all humanity perceives. This ability to perceive the whole makes the sage the equivalent of heaven. But he can only perceive this reality, if there is another one (as Taoists and Buddhists said) the sage would not be able to know about it (sec. 2). The sage's work is to realize the potential of humanity. Just as heaven deploys the four seasons to bring things to completion so does the sage use the four classics/constants (the Change, Documents, Odes, and Spring and Autumn Annals) to realize humanity's potential (sec. 3).

However, as antiquity shows there are distinction in the modes for realizing society's potential. The following table brings together a series of correlations.

Three monarchs	Five emperors	Three kings	Five hegemon
<i>share the same:</i>	<i>share the same:</i>	<i>share the same:</i>	<i>share the same:</i>
Idea	Words	Image	Number
Benevolence	Ritual	Righteousness	Knowledge
Nature	Emotions	Form	Structure

<sup>122</sup> Shao Yong 邵雍, Huang ji jing Shih shu 皇極經世書, Ssu-pu pei-yao ed. (Taipei: Taiwan Chung-hua shu-chū, (rpt. 1969)), 5.1a-6.27b. The summary corresponds to the twelve numbered sections of the text.

Sageliness	Worthiness	Talent	Technique
<i>but differently:</i>	<i>but differently:</i>	<i>but differently:</i>	<i>but differently:</i>
Transform	Teach	Exhort	Command
<i>through:</i>	<i>through:</i>	<i>through:</i>	<i>through:</i>
Way	Virtue	Achievement	Force

Knowing that these correlations exist, however, the sage can change the situation just as heaven changes the seasons. The one requirement is that he be guided by a single standard: does it “give life to the populace.” (sec. 4). Confucius was the greatest sage because he understood that styles of rule must change with the times (just as the four Classics are subject to continuity and change). So although the four modes of rule lasted for longer or shorter period, the Way of Confucius employs all possibilities and thus lasts forever. (sec. 5). Confucius was able to see this because he lived under hegemons in the last stage but had access to the Classics which enabled him to see the whole. (sec. 6).

Because there is not one correct way to rule the best thing the ruler today can do is choose as his ministers those who have “fathomed [this system] fully in their minds.” (sec. 7) He will be able to do this if he is devoted to opening the way to life for all. (sec. 8) In three generations he can move society from the current state of the Hegemon to the state of the Emperor, one stage per generation. (sec. 9) What the ruler must understand is that there are cycles within cycles and variations within variations. There are in fact sixteen different states of rulership. (In this as in and most of Shao’s grids the upper left-hand corner is the best and lower right-hand corner the worst).

	Monarch	Emperor	King	Hegemon
Monarch	monarch-monarch	emperor-monarch	king- monarch	hegemon-monarch

Emperor	monarch-emperor	emperor-emperor	king-emperor	hegemon-emperor
King	monarch-king	emperor-king	king-king	hegemon-king
Hegemon	monarch-hegemon	emperor-hegemon	king-hegemon	hegemon-hegemon

Which maps onto 16 means of ruling:

	Way	Virtue	Achievement	Force
Way	With the Way practice affairs of the Way	w/ Way practice affairs of the Virtue	w/ Way practice affairs of the Achievement	w/ Way practice affairs of the Force
Virtue	w/ Virtue practice affairs of the Way	w/ Virtue practice affairs of Virtue	w/ Virtue practice affairs of the Achievement	w/ Virtue practice affairs of Force
Achievement	w/ Achievement practice affairs of the Way	w/ Achievement practice affairs of Virtue	w/ Achievement practice affairs of Achievement	w/ Achievement practice affairs of Force
Force	w/ Force practice affairs of the Way	w/ Force practice affairs of Virtue	w/ Force practice affairs of Achievement	w/ Force practice affairs of Force

The hegemon-hegemon who uses force to practice the affairs of force can become something better. It only requires understanding and sustained effort. But one must begin from where he finds himself. (sec. 10).

Man is that in which “heaven-and-earth and the myriad things are complete” and heaven and earth are fully integrated (sec.11). What humans can do to realize this potential is to become the “*shih* among *shih*”, i.e the best of the four statuses, *shih*, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants ), the highest kind of highest class of human, by gaining the broadest and most inclusive view. To do they must learn to “observe things,” not with the eyes, not even with the mind, but with patterns (*li*) and gain true knowledge. In order to do this they must to practice “reverse observation:” to observe things in terms of each other, not from the perspective of oneself (and one’s own interests). So I know, Shao concludes, that I am a man like others and that we are all “things,” and thus I can use the eyes, ears, mouth, and mind of all under heaven to see, hear, speak, and plan. Then what I know will be complete, this is what it means to be “perfectly intuiting (*shen*), perfectly sage.”

The Inner Chapters on Observing Things illustrated what Shao means by “using things to observe things.” He can include everything and although it pigeonholes everything it proposes that there are systematic, predictable relationships between categories which can be generated through simple operations, both on paper and in life. For Shao the material world is complete and sufficient, and contains within itself the guides to its own perfection. The task for the literati is to learn how to see the world like this, if they do they can know exactly where they are at any point, and thus they will know how to change the course of history.

### Chang Tsai

The final example of a mid-century cosmologist is Chang Tsai (1020-1077). Chang passed the *chin-shih* examination under Ou-yang Hsiu in 1057 and served in local government until being summoned to court in 1069, where he soon fell out with Wang An-shih and retired. His Correcting Youthful Ignorance (Cheng meng 正蒙), completed near at the end of his life was the summa of his intellectual endeavor. Chang too was indebted to the Change but in contrast to Chou and Shao he used his understanding of how humans were connected to the “way of heaven-and-earth” to explain why an individual could learn to become a sage. Chang also had a sociopolitical vision drawn from the Rites of Chou, which he saw as a radically decentralized polity that individuals could put into practice. He was trying to do this when he died.

Here I summarize Ira Kasoff’s study of Chang’s philosophy.<sup>123</sup> Chang used to idea that there is nothing but *ch’i* in the universe, which was either condensing into things or dissipating back into the “great void,” to tackle a number of issues. *Contra* the Taoists he argued that because everything was *ch’i*, there was no such thing as non-being (*wu*) or any “source” of things

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<sup>123</sup> Ira Kasoff, The Thought of Chang Tsai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

that was beyond understanding, and *contra* the Buddhists he held that because *ch'i* remained when things disappeared the world was not illusory. *Ch'i* made all things a reality and it defined an ultimate moral goal: to continue the life process in a harmonious manner.<sup>124</sup> Chang applied the same analysis to the human being, figuring that as a living being he must replicate in some way the larger creative process. The real void of undifferentiated *ch'i*, the source of life, was human nature, something all possessed, and it existed in a body of condensed *ch'i* which in diverse ways distorted the “heavenly nature.”

Learning, Chang concluded, could be nothing other than cleaning up the *ch'i* so that one could become aware of the heavenly nature and thus be in tune with the process of creation. Chang's interest in the natural world did not go beyond these basic principles. Nor was he particularly interested in the textual tradition. It was good to memorize and recite the Classics, but other texts were not important. Ritual was the best way to improve one's *ch'i* constitution and . Sagehood was, as it was for Chou Tun-i, a state of being. When the mind, with undifferentiated *ch'i* as its substance, was in a state of disinterestedness it could sense what was in accord with the principles of integrated and harmonious life process. This was its moral knowledge (te-hsing chih chih 德性之知), something qualitatively different from cumulative factual knowledge.<sup>125</sup>

The sage was one who having reached the stage where the mind had become sensitized expanded its awareness so that he could see the creative process operating in human life. The sage would be like a mirror at the center of all activity, reflecting accurately the unfolding of the many strands of life process. Empty and free of bias he takes in everything and sees the incipient springs of developments. Acting spontaneously, without thinking and without knowledge, he is

<sup>124</sup> Kasoff, The Thought of Chang Tsai, chap. 2.

<sup>125</sup> Kasoff, The Thought of Chang Tsai, chap. 3.

stimulated by events and responds appropriately. He is engaged with the world and seeks to continue the process of creation without interfering in it. Capable of seeing patterns of development and change he can guide the populace, as did the sages of antiquity when they identified the seasons and the agricultural cycle. He regulates human affairs with ritual and his personal model stimulates the minds of others.<sup>126</sup>

Chang Tsai also had a social program, one which depended on literati accepting his vision of learning and sagehood. Although Chang detached learning to be a sage from serving in government -- literati can become sages irrespective of their official status -- it is clear that he saw the point of learning as being able to take one's share of personal responsibility for society. Chang's famous "Western Inscription" (the last chapter of Correcting Youthful Ignorance) begins with a heaven-and-earth based egalitarianism. Given that we are the children of heaven-and-earth, with a substance that is the content of heaven-and-earth and a nature that is the controller of heaven-and-earth, the emperor becomes his brother and he has familial responsibility toward all those in need.<sup>127</sup> Many of Chang's practical comments on ordering are couched in discussions of Chou li models. In particular he was a proponent of the so-called "well field" system antiquity, in which the polity was highly decentralized and, at the local level, groups of nine farming families with equal shares of land formed communities around a revenue producing common field. Chang argued that this system could be implemented in the present without confiscating land by, among other things, enfeoffing high officials. The well-field system would also provide soldiers, making a professional army unnecessary, and thus making it

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<sup>126</sup> Kasoff, The Thought of Chang Tsai, chap. 4.

<sup>127</sup> Chang Tsai chi 張載集 (Pei-ching: Chung-hua, 1974), p. 62; trans. Chan, A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 497.

unnecessary to collect large amounts of revenue.<sup>128</sup> A true restoration of feudalism might not be a real option in the present but, Chang insisted, it was the only way. “The sage apportions the realm under heaven to people, and thus all matters are put in order.”<sup>129</sup> Those with hereditary fiefs would provide local services and help those in need.<sup>130</sup> Wang An-shih also used the Chou li to justify centralizing and interventionist policies in local society, but Chang’s reading of that text was quite different. For example, Chang’s support for a market stabilization program in which officials would buy and sell goods with official funds seems to agree with one of the New Policies). In fact Chang saw this as one aspect of a decentralized feudal system. The market officials would manage commercial centers independently of the central government: “The market policy is only the affair of the one market official, it is not an affair of royal policy.”<sup>131</sup> Chang attached importance to lineage formation – “[The sentence] ‘The Son of Heaven establishes the state; feudal lords establish their lineages’ is also heavenly principle” – and taught students about how to do it.<sup>132</sup> Once the well-field system was in place ritual (in a broad sense, including education and reward and punishment) would be all that was needed to order the populace. Ritual could be changed with the times, but only by those who understood “that ritual is based on what is so-by-itself of Heaven” and thus had to be developed by sagely literati.<sup>133</sup>

Chang’s feudal view of government, family, and ritual fits his understanding of what it means to learn. The decentralization of political power and its condensation in the hands of local leaders requires that the elite learn to “complete their natures” and gain the qualities that enabled

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<sup>128</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 249-50.

<sup>129</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 251.

<sup>130</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 250.

<sup>131</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 249.

<sup>132</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 259.

<sup>133</sup> Chang Tsai chi, p. 264. Also see Chow, Kai-wing “Ritual, Cosmology, and Ontology: Chang Tsai's Moral Philosophy and Neo-Confucian Ethics”, Philosophy East and West 43.2 (1993): 201-28.



the sage kings of the past to govern, except that now they would each need to act as sages within their own domains. Chang's opposed the New Policies on the grounds that governance should be locally formulated rather than centrally mandated. He died before he was able to acquire land to create a well-field community and show that he had a better alternative. His followers joined the Ch'eng brothers.

### Finding an Alternative to the New Learning

For most of fifty years before the Song lost the north China plain to the Jurchens' Jin empire the court was led by advocates of the New Policies (1069-85, 1093-1100, 1102-1124). Because Wang An-shih and his followers had a program for teaching the literati their way of learning intellectual culture during this period quickly came to be defined in relation to what was called the "Wang Learning" or the "New Learning." Many of the figures discussed to this point died in the 1070s the New Policies. The opposition to the New Policies came from Ssu-ma Kuang, who died soon after the opposition regained power in 1085, and two younger men, the literary intellectual Su Shih and the moral philosopher Ch'eng I, both of whom were at the center of circles of admiring literati students and officials. Both articulated alternatives to the New Learning.

Before turning to Su and Ch'eng it will be useful to note the degree to which the New Learning was institutionalized. New Learning was meant to prepare students to serve the goals of the New Policies, as described in the first Palace Examination question asked under Wang An-shih:

When the sages exercised kingship over the empire (*t'ien-hsia*) all officials fulfilled the duties of their offices and all affairs were correctly

organized. If there was something left undone then they did it, and whatever they did succeeded. If there was someone left unreformed then they reformed him, and whomever they reformed accepted it. The fields were opened to farming; the irrigation channels were in good repair. Plants and trees flourished. Fowl and beast, fish and reptile, all realized their natures. They had the wealth to make the rites complete, the knowledge to perfect music, and the administration to see that punishments accurately fit [the crime]. Gentlemen, what must be done to attain this?<sup>134</sup>

The New Policies regimes also had a fairly consistent intellectual policy: to teach literati a new way of thinking that would help them keep perfecting the polity by requiring them to pass through a school system with a common curriculum. Shared values, even at the risk of instilling uniformity, was a good thing, and in the early twelfth century other points of view were actively suppressed.

Under Wang An-shih the court moved quickly to transform the examination system. It abolished the “Various Fields” of memorization of various canonical texts and exegetical knowledge. In the *chin-shih* examination it replaced the regulated verse poem and rhyme-prose with ten discussions of the meaning of passages from one single Classic of choice (*Odes*, *Documents*, *Change*, *Rites of Chou*, *Book of Rites*) and ten on the *Analects* and *Mencius*; the essay and treatises on questions of policy or scholarship were kept. The government began work on new commentaries: the *New Meanings of the Rites of Chou*, *Odes*, and *Documents* were produced by Wang An-shih, his son Wang P’ang 王雱 (1042-1076), and the Office for

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<sup>134</sup> Sung hui-yao chi-kao 宋會要輯稿, comp. Hsü Sung 徐松 (Pei-p’ing: 1936; rpt. Taipei: Shih-chieh, 1964): *hsüan-chü* 選舉 7.19a-b.

Commentaries on the Classics; Wang An-shih himself wrote commentaries on the *Change, Book of Rites*, and *Analects* and produced the *Explanation of Characters*. Wang P'ang wrote the commentary on the *Mencius*. A field in the legal codes was added in 1102 and a field in the Taoist classics – the *Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor* and Emperor Hui-tsung's commentaries on the *Lao-tzu*, *Chuang-tzu*, and *Lieh-tzu* – between 1118 and 1124.<sup>135</sup>

At the same time the court ordered unprecedented investments in education: state schools and salaried teachers for every prefecture and county. Under Hui-tsung (r. 1100-25) primary schools were attached to existing schools. Schools were to provide room and board, using income derived from rents on local government land. For example, in 1109 there were 167,662 registered school students supported by rents from about 1.5 million acres. Special schools for math, law, painting, calligraphy, and medicine were established at the capital and eventually medical schools were mandated for all prefectures.<sup>136</sup> At the same time county and prefectural schools adopted the Three Hall System of the Imperial University. Student were expected to actually attend these schools, they had regular examinations, and they were promoted from one grade to the next on the basis of examinations.

The goal was eventually to replace the examination system with a school system. From 1107 to 1120 literati were no longer allowed to take the prefectural qualifying examination outside of the school system. Students graduated from the county to the prefecture to the Imperial University and then, once every three years University students took the palace examination, or, if their grades were exceptional they could be appointed directly from the

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<sup>135</sup> Yüan Cheng 袁 征, *Sung-tai chiao-yü – Chung-kuo ku-tai chiao-yü te li-shih hsing chuan-che ku-tai chiao-yü te li-shih hsing chuan-che* 宋代教育 -- 中國古代 教育的歷史性轉折, (Kuang-tung: Kuang-tung Kao-teng chiao-yü chu-pan she, 1991), pp. 30-31, 43.

<sup>136</sup> Edward Kracke, "The Expansion of Educational Opportunity in the Reign of Hui-tsung of the Sung and its Implications" *Sung Studies Newsletter* 13 (1977): 6-30, citing of the Director of Education in 1109.

University to office (about thirty students were directly appointed every year). The quota for passes was increased by about fifty percent (from 550 to 750 every three years) but only those who had passed through the school system were eligible to take the exams.<sup>137</sup> For the first time the educational system and the selection system were united.

New Policies education aimed at “unifying morality and making customs the same” (*tao-te t’ung feng-su*). Ideological unity was both a precondition to the integrated and prosperous social order it sought to create and a consequence of creating it.<sup>138</sup> Opponents argued – the circle around the great literary intellectual Su Shih in particular – that it was not possible to make everyone the same, no matter how laudable the ends uniformity was meant to serve.<sup>139</sup> But for the court it was. Even the edict creating the Painting Academy asserted that it would “Unify morality and show respect for following models in order to make all practices under heaven the same.”<sup>140</sup> From the start the curriculum had excluded the Spring and Autumn Annals, the one Classic that connected moral judgment to historical events. In 1102 the court ordered that the moral philosophy of the Ch’eng brothers not be taught and that literary models not be taken from Su Shih and his group. Generally it was forbidden to teach historical and literary works as well as the teachings and writings of the anti-New Policies officials who dominated the court between 1085 and 1093. At moments the antipathy was especially pronounced – as when students at the

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<sup>137</sup> Yüan Cheng 袁 征, Sung-tai chiao-yü, pp. 120-51. Kondo Kazunari 近藤 一成, “Sai Kyo no kakyo, gakko seisaku” 蔡京の科擧・學校政策, Tōyōshi kenkyū 53.1 (1994): 24-49, argues that the triennial examinations during these years were exceptions to the rule in each case, and the court had wanted to appoint all officials directly from the Imperial University.

<sup>138</sup> Sung hui-yao: hsüan-chü 選舉 3.44b, for 1071/2/1. The phrase comes from the “Institutions of the King” chapter in the Book of Rites.

<sup>139</sup> Peter K. Bol, “Examinations and Orthodoxies: 1070 and 1313 Compared,” in Culture and the State in Chinese History (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), and “The Examination System and Sung Literati Culture” La société civile face à l’État dans les traditions chinoise, japonaise, coréenne et vietnamienne, ed. Leon Vandermeersch (Paris: École française d’extrême-orient, 1994): 55-75.

<sup>140</sup> See Sung-shih 157.3688 and Sung hui-yao: ch’ung-ju 崇儒 3.1a. Note that the Painting Academy’s students were divided between the literati and painters of other social backgrounds;

Imperial University burned Ou-yang Hsiu's writings. Criticism of the court was considered a top infraction of school rules and might result in exile.

The demonization of the New Policies and the resurrection of Su Shih and Ch'eng I that began in the Southern Song period eventually was so effective that almost nothing remains that can tell us what the New Policies educators were trying to accomplish aside from suppressing opposition views. It was, after all, a fairly successful educational apparatus which, much of the time, encouraged learning and knowledge. There were, for example, at least twenty-two figures, almost all of whom came from the south, who produced sizeable literary collections and numerous other works.<sup>141</sup> Few except Shen Kua, some of whose work did survive, have received sustained attention. Hui-tsung's interest in Taoism seems not to have been representative of the intellectual tone.<sup>142</sup> The court's economic and social policies required the investigation of the actual situation, careful planning, and concerted effort. A better illustration of the ethos might be Hui-tsung's creation of the refined and technically sophisticated palace production of auspicious paintings.<sup>143</sup> They were better paintings of that sort than anyone else had ever done and they celebrated the notion that Heaven looked with favor on Sung, the emperor, and his policies. The same thing could be said for the palaces, universities, and temples the Directorate for Construction was undertaking. Its greatest director, Li Chieh 李 誠 (d. 1108) was author of the *Manual on Architecture* (*Ying-tsao fa-shih* 營造法式), the famous guide to the design and

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<sup>141</sup> Shen Sung-ch'ün 沈 松 勤, Pei Sung wen-jen yü t'ang-cheng – Chung-kuo shih-ta-fu ch'un-t'i yen-chiu chih-i 北宋文人與黨爭 -- 中國士大夫群體研究之一 (Bei-ching: Jen-min, 1998), pp. 182-202.

<sup>142</sup> For an account of the Hui-tsung's Taoist projects see Patricia Buckley Ebrey, "Art and Taoism in the Court of Song Huizong," Taoism and the Arts of China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000): 101-18.

<sup>143</sup> Roberta Bickford, "Emperor Huizong and the Aesthetic of Agency," forthcoming in Archives of Asian Art.

construction of all building based on the principle of modular design. Like Hui-tsung he was erudite in antiquities, a skillful calligrapher and painter, a great bibliophile, and an expert on epigraphy, musical instruments, and horses. Li Chieh's buildings and Hui-tsung's palace art have much in common: high technical standards, a lack interest in individual variation, a concern with effective functioning, and a coherence of design in which all the parts fit together seamlessly and can be applied by anyone anywhere for the same result. The bibliographic record shows that the New Policies regimes were more committed to the creation of clearly defined systems that could be codified rather than ad hoc arrangements and personal initiative than any other period in the Sung.<sup>144</sup> Su Shih's critique of the new educational policy, that it aimed to produce literati "like striking prints off a block, all you need to do is color them in," seems to be on the mark.<sup>145</sup>

The advent of the New Policies pressed those, like Su Shih and Ch'eng Hao, who had once supported reform to clarify the grounds for their opposition. This was also an intellectual challenge, for the New Policies were justified by learning and once in power Wang An-shih began to claim that the policies were also in harmony with heaven-and-earth and innate human qualities.<sup>146</sup> But it was not just a matter of finding an alternative to Wang's learning. The opposition was itself divided into factions associated with Su, Ssu-ma Kuang, and Ch'eng I.<sup>147</sup> Su and the Ch'eng brothers offered a way literati as individuals could learn for themselves and, by doing so, establish their own self-worth independently of service in government. In this sense

<sup>144</sup> Peter K. Bol, "Whither the Emperor? Emperor Huizong, the New Policies, and the Tang-Song Transition", Journal of Song and Yuan Studies.31 (2001): 103-34.

<sup>145</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", p. 273.

<sup>146</sup> Ch'en Kuan 陳 瓘 wrote (after he had turned against the New Policies) that in all ways Wang had based the New Policies and the new curriculum on claims to *hsing-ming chih li* 性命之理; see Sung Chung-su Ch'en Liao-chai Ssu-ming tsun Yao chi 宋忠肅陳了齋四明尊堯集 (Hsü-hsiu SKCS ed.), preface.

<sup>147</sup> Accounts of these factions can be found in Lo Chia-hsiang 羅家祥, Pei Sung tang-cheng yen-chiu 北宋黨爭研究, (Taipei: Wen-chin, 1993) and Shen Sung-ch'in, Pei Sung wen-jen yü tang-cheng.

they also serve as a critique of the court's continued emphasis on the way of the sages as an approach to transforming society through the reform of government. In the case of Su Shih, the literary successor to Ou-yang Hsiu, this meant the end of the Ancient Style view that the literary enterprise should be concerned with defining values for political culture.<sup>148</sup> In the case of Ch'eng I, who proclaimed himself and his brother to be the only true Confucians, this meant an end to the focus on making the state system moral, a concern that had dominated Confucian thought and practice since the Han dynasty.

### *The Su Learning*

Su Shih's readership over the centuries has seen him as a literary figure.<sup>149</sup> He was, but he also explained why literature and art mattered. He did so, his brother asserted after his death, in the context of an understanding "the learning of high antiquity which had been disrupted" and which he had "clarified through inference" from the Classics.<sup>150</sup> Su Shih's commentaries of the Change (a work begun by his father) and the Documents were one of his vehicles for making his arguments about the learning (his commentary on the Analects is lost).

Su set out to demonstrate that when understood correctly antiquity did not provide support for the New Policies, but he also set out to provide a new understanding of the way of the sages as something all people would be capable of practicing in daily life.

In his Documents commentary Su makes clear that the first sages, the "Former Kings" (*hsien wang*) were very good by but no means perfect rulers who faced problems common to all of history. As rulers they were successful because they consulted with others, accepted criticism,

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<sup>148</sup> Ho Chi-p'eng, Pei Sung te ku-wen yün-tung, pp. 282-87.

<sup>149</sup> Two recent works in English are Michael Anthony Fuller, The Road To East Slope: The Development of Su Shih's Poetic Voice (Stanford: University of California Press, 1990). Ronald C. Egan, Word, Image, and Deed in the Life of Su Shih (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1994).

<sup>150</sup> Su Shih 蘇軾, Su Tung-p'o chi 蘇東坡集 (Kuo-hsiieh chi-pen ts'ung-shu ed.) forematter: 49-50.

responded to public opinion, and recognized that effective policy required building public support. "Confucius must have thought that the one sentence that could lose the state was this: 'The populace should all be like me.'"<sup>151</sup> They accepted the legitimacy of private interests and private wealth and did not try to destroy elites and their families (contradicting Wang An-shih's contention that land-amassing local elites were the obstacle). Even as they were driven to rely ever more on law and institutions they strove to ensure that there was a place for individual judgment according to the situation. They preferred ritual to law, and its appeal to honor rather than fear.

The way the sages governed came to define "benevolent governance;" their conduct came to be codified as virtues. Individuals can, through a process of mental internalization, make these virtues these their own second nature, so to speak, and will act accordingly. But Su proposed something more, rather than simply imitating the virtues of the sages one could learn to become a sage himself: "If one enacts a virtue without knowing the *li* by which it is so then his virtue is like borrowed goods, it is not something he himself possesses. If he himself cannot possess it how will he be able to extend it to others?"<sup>152</sup> To be able to function like a sage means going beyond imitation and internalization.<sup>153</sup>

Su saw sages as successfully coping with an unstable world by responding to events as they unfolded. They did not adhere to fixed standards yet what they did was appropriate under those circumstances. They were able to respond flexibly and creatively for two reasons, Su determined. First, they sought to understand what they confronted, which in Su's terms meant apprehending the patterns (*li*) of the matter at hand – i.e. understanding how it was gornaized,

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<sup>151</sup> Su Shih, Shu chuan 書傳 20.7b, Legge, The Shoo King, p. 627.

<sup>152</sup> Su Shih, Shu chuan 12.12a-12b.

<sup>153</sup> Bol, "This Culture of Ours", p. 284-89.



how it came to be, and how it would develop if left alone. Second, they understood that the source guiding their responses to events was in themselves, not in things. They were not controlled by events nor did they need a dogma because they had “a ruler within” (*chung yu chu* 中有主).<sup>154</sup> At first glance this sounds something like Ch’eng I’s idea that there are *li* in things and in the self, by fathoming the principles of things outside one become aware that one already has it inside oneself as one’s moral nature. However, in his commentaries and in his occasional writings Su insisted that the “ruler within” was not something that could be sought and defined, at best one could catch on to it and apprehend it for oneself (*tzu te* 自得). Taking up a passage that contrasts the “human mind” with the “tao mind” – a passage Chu Hsi would later use to make an absolute distinction between selfish desire and an innate moral awareness – Su argues that “human mind” refers to the emotions common to all people and “tao mind” to an “original mind” in the self whence emotions arise, but: “As for the original mind. Where is it in fact? Does it exist [phenomenally]? Or does it not exist? If it exists [as a phenomenon] then that which brings into being pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy is not the original mind [i.e. a particular thing cannot be the one source for many emotions]. If it does not exist then what is it that brings into being pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy? Therefore, the original mind is not something scholars can seek through effort, yet those who have caught on can apprehend it for themselves.”<sup>155</sup> The challenge was to unify the two, to make sure that one’s responses to the world were tied not only to an understanding of the phenomena one confronted but were also grounded in something internal that could not be defined.<sup>156</sup>

In his commentary on the Change Su gives a more elaborate account of how it is possible

<sup>154</sup> Su Shih, Shu chuan 7.20b-21a.

<sup>155</sup> Su Shih, Shu chuan 3.7b-8b.

<sup>156</sup> Bol, “This Culture of Ours”, p. 289-92.

to rely on internal guidance to act responsibly in a world of diversity and change . Like many others he posits that there is an ultimate and unitary source where all things come into being, we are in some sense all one. This exists in heaven-and-earth (where by convention it is called *tao*) and in the person (by convention called *hsing*, “human nature”). However, for Su it is essential that this ultimate source not be defined as something –to define it would create fixed standards and make one unable to cope with changing circumstances. One cannot define the source in terms of its products. The good is a product of human nature, but one cannot define human nature as good. It is possible to define the process by which things arise from this source – and this is how Su can define a way of learning for all – but the source itself remains beyond definition. All inherent patterns (*li*) are one *li*, Su agrees, but you cannot hold onto the "one" as something fixed and defined. One can “catch on” in practice but it cannot be known intellectually.

Su’s definition of learning depends on his perspective on the human condition. The human world is one of ever-multiplying dualities (for Su the yin-yang process is pervasive), ever more distant from the ultimate source when all things came into being. Su’s image is of always being carried off "downstream" into a world that is becoming ever more complex and diverse with the creation of new things. A single spring which, over time, gives rise to a complex river system with humanity being carried ever further away along the many streams, losing sight of the source. Yet for Su if this splintering world is to avoid destroying itself there must be people who respond to events by creating or doing things that people can share, that will incline them to work together and cooperate, and that will tap into their commonality. "Those in antiquity who were good at governing never competed with the people. Instead they allowed them to choose for

themselves and then guided them to it.”<sup>157</sup> He does not end diversity, he just makes sure that everything is in a safe channel.

How is this to be accomplished? The solution is to work one’s way “upstream,” as Su puts it. He can do this, as Su argues with reference to things as diverse as swimming, music, and the desires, by understanding intellectually the *li* of the category of the thing or affair at hand. He can study the *li* of water (how one sinks and floats) and learn to swim; he can reflect on his feelings and see that there is something beyond desire whence desire arises. But in the end there is a leap into an intuitive unity with the source and oneness with the thing at hand. At this point he achieves spontaneity and, being one with water or with his own character, he can respond to it (or from it) without calculation. What he produces will provide the guides he and others need. Thus he acts in a manner true to himself and to the thing he is responding to and brings things into being that have real value for that moment. Su’s spontaneity is premised on knowledge, thought, and learning. His aim is to accomplish things of value. As he does so he is exemplifying Confucius’ claim that “Man can broaden *tao*, it is not that *tao* can broaden man.”<sup>158</sup>

In literature and art Su demonstrated what he meant. The unique style of a calligrapher is formed through the study of past styles, and yet it draws on some creative source within himself so that it is new and different. At the same time its uniqueness resonates with what has gone before and others can appreciate it and learn from it, even as they develop their own styles. For Su style mattered but literature and art were also vehicles for expressing what one had learned about something and for demonstrating how one responded to it. As one of the greatest poets and essayists of his day Su was doing this constantly, offering the particular instance and his

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<sup>157</sup> Su Shih, *Su-shih i chuan* 蘇氏易傳 6.138.

<sup>158</sup> Analects 15.29. Su Shih, *Su-shih i chuan* 7.160 For a detailed account of Su’s views see Bol, “Su Shih and Culture.”

individual responses as the mediating lens through which his readers could see the world. His larger argument was that this kind of deep engagement in literature and art not only produced things of value but also was a way of developing the ability to respond to world from a combination of acquired knowledge and internal creativity. It was, he insisted, a valid means of gaining and judging the worth of an individual.<sup>159</sup> Government did not need an agenda, in Su's view, it needed people who would help others pursue their own interests in socially productive ways.

### *The Ch'eng Learning*

Ch'eng I (1033-1107) and his brother Ch'eng Hao (1032-1085) developed a method of learning that, despite official suppression, came to be seen as the great alternative to the New Learning of Wang An-shih. After failing the palace examination Ch'eng I devoted his life in Loyang to learning and teaching. His earliest known writing argued that the kind of learning taught by Confucius was premised on that which was innate to humans as creatures of heaven-and-earth humans; only by cultivating this endowment (and not by pursuing the learning of texts and literary composition) could one become a sage. At that point, in 1059, Ch'eng conceived of this endowment as five natures corresponding to the Five Elements which were realized as the five virtues. By 1086, when he was brought to court as a tutor to Emperor Che-tsung, he had jettisoned the five phases in favor of a method of learning premised on the theory that the innate endowment that could provide moral guidance was *li*.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Also see Michael A. Fuller, "Pursuing the Complete Bamboo in the Breast: Reflections on a Classical Chinese Image for Immediacy", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 53.1: 5-24.

<sup>160</sup> Discussed in Bol, "Ch'eng Yi (1033-1107) as a Literatus," in *The Power of Culture*, ed. Willard Peterson, Kao Yu-kung, and Andrew Plaks (Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1994). This section is based on Bol, "This Culture of Ours", pp. 300-27, and A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: The Metaphysics of the Brothers Cheng* (La Salle: Open Court, 1992 [1958]).

Practically all the intellectuals of the late eleventh century used the term *li* in the sense of the common patterns or norms for categories of thing or the principles according to which things worked as part of a whole. Chang Tsai, for example, used *li* to refer to how the pattern of the *yin-yang* process condensed and dissipated *ch'i*. For Ch'eng I, however, *li* was not a proposition about how things worked but something that was real and substantial in the thing itself. It was only visible to the mind, and thus was inherently different from factual knowledge and perceptions. But it was visible to the mind because it was also the principle of the mind's workings, it was the nature of the mind. Ch'eng rejected Chang's view that *ch'i* was recycled throughout the universe (he believed that the universe and the individual were constantly generating new *ch'i*), and argued instead that it was *li* that was universal and constant. *Li* named that which people in the past had been referring to when they used the terms *hsing* (human nature) and *tao*. Thanks to *li* there was a real and necessary way everything should be, and the individual could cultivate the ability to know it with total certainty.

In Ch'eng I's usage the concept *li* does at least three things. First, it is that in things which gives them a coherent, integrated structure: the structure of a tree integrates leaf, branch, trunk, and root, and the structure of filial piety ties together parent and child in ways that create distinct social roles. Second, it is that which guides the process of development of a thing: the tree goes through daily, annual, and life cycles; the relationship and roles between the parent child change and develop over time. Third, *li* determines the function of a thing as part of a larger whole: the tree has different functions depending on the system it is part of (forest, economy, wood for building) and wood from different trees can best be used for different purposes; the child-parent relationship has a function in a larger entities of lineage, community, and state. For Ch'eng these larger contexts are natural developments, and thus do not undermine

his claim that the *li* of something is in the thing rather than in our ideas about things. All things have *li*. Ch'eng, again like others at the time, asserts the unity of *li* in the sense that all roads lead to the capital or all things ultimately came into being from a single source and are part of an organic whole. What he and Ch'eng Hao asserted that was different was the oneness of *li*. All *li* were one and the same *li*. We might say that the quality of having structure, process, and function did not vary. We can comprehend this dual sense of unity and oneness when *li* is translated as "coherence." Any given thing has its own coherence and the coherence of one thing is just as coherent as the coherence of another; coherence itself does not vary even when each thing has its own coherence.<sup>161</sup>

It follows from this that *li* defines the value of any given thing. If a thing accords with its *li* then it is by definition functioning as it ought to function, harmoniously as part of a larger whole. To keep the process of life ongoing it is necessary that the *li* of things be realized. It thus defines that which should guide human activity from the individual's daily acts on up to government policy. Ch'eng had an explanation for why, although the necessary guides were already in things and men, people had lost their way, had been left at the mercy of selfish desire, and had turned to religion for help. When people lost awareness of *li* they let the mind be controlled by the push and pull of *ch'i*.

*Ch'i* itself was not bad. Ch'eng believed that in antiquity right behavior was inculcated into people by influencing their *ch'i*. People were originally brought into being out of the pure *ch'i* of heaven-and-earth, but as they procreated over time the quality of *ch'i* deteriorated and it became impossible to lead a moral life simply by trying to maintain the ancient forms. The sages created civilization in a cumulative fashion over time, not in response to human desires and needs but as the means of giving form to the *li* for human life with ceremonies, music, clothing,

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<sup>161</sup> Willard J. Peterson, "Another Look at Li," Bulletin of Sung and Yüan Studies 18 (1986): 13-32.

and so on (Ch'eng insists that because cultural creations were generated from insight into *li* they cannot be called "man-made).” But these did not have the same effects on people in the present because the quality of *ch'i* had declined since antiquity and ancient cultural implements no longer worked on them. In some cases he merely stated that the ancient means of inculcating right behavior in people had been lost. In either case the result was the same, literati in the present would have to rely on mental effort and see *li* for themselves.

“For the ancients learning was easy. In their eighth year they entered the minor school and in their fifteenth the greater school. There were decorations (wen-ts'ai) to nurture their sight, sounds to nurture their hearing, majestic ceremonies to nurture their four limbs, song and dance to nurture their circulation.... Today these are all lost, there is only i-li to nurture the mind. Must we not make an effort?”<sup>162</sup>

Cultivating the person now meant nurturing the mind.

Chh'eng held that humans can become aware of *li*, once they know it is there, because it is in things and in them. Moreover, humans are endowed with *t'ien-li*, “heavenly principle,” meaning all the principles of cosmos as an organic whole. The mind can become aware of *li* but the mind is subject to distraction and adulteration. Thus students must train themselves to illuminate *li*. Although some have purer *ch'i* than others and can learn to do so more quickly, in theory everyone can learn to illuminate *li* and see exactly the same thing. If they do so, they will both refine their *ch'i*, become every more aware of *t'ien-li*, and instinctively accord with *li* when they respond to events in the external world.

In explaining how to do this Ch'eng drew on a passage from the “Great Learning” chapter of the *Book of Rites* which he took to mean that “attaining knowledge depends on investigating things.” To “investigate things” is to fathom the *li* of the thing, and to realize that one has fathomed

<sup>162</sup> Ishu 21A.268, emended following formulations in Ishu 15.162-3, 17.177, 18.200, and 22A.277.

the *li* in the object of one's attention, whether it is a text from the sages or a practice such as filial piety, is to realize one's own nature (*jin xing* 盡性) for human nature is nothing other than the totality of *li*. There is an internal aspect to this. Ch'eng I speaks of "inner mental attentiveness" (*ching* 敬) which is to keep the mind impartial and undistracted by "taking unity/oneness as its ruler." The external aspect involves thinking about things. Should one try to know many things and see as many *li* as possible or will it suffice to see one thing well enough to apprehend what *li* is? Ch'eng says both. This is not a recognition but a recognition of both the unity of *li* and the oneness of *li*. In either case one must maintain a state of integrity (*ch'eng*), that is, maintain the coherence of *li* in one's awareness.

The call to "investigate things and fathom their *li*" as a continuous and expansive process sets Ch'eng I apart from Ch'eng Hao. For Ch'eng Hao investigating things was repair work for someone who has lost awareness of *t'ien-li*. The person who preserves attentiveness (although with Ch'eng Hao *ching* might better be translated as "composure" rather than "attentiveness") and integrity, who maintains a state of what Ch'eng Hao called "humaneness" (*jen*), is in a state of unity with heaven-and-earth and the myriad things. In theory this awareness guarantees that the individual's spontaneous responses to things will correct and encourage them, bringing them into the condition of harmony and equilibrium that is the proper state of self, society, and cosmos.<sup>163</sup> Ch'eng Hao's sage is in this sense closer to the spontaneously responsive non-intellectual figure Chang Tsai had in mind.

Ch'eng I's concern with an expanding understanding of the principles in external phenomena and texts, and his tendency to differentiate the virtues (albeit in terms of *li*) – rather than as a unified sensibility inherent in the self – led him to go beyond a concern with being able to

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<sup>163</sup> Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers*, pp. 96-107, 127-30.



respond spontaneously to things. For example, he spoke of creating rituals that would work in the present, something only one who like himself “knew the Way” could succeed at. He taught the Book of Change (the commentary was compiled by his students) and the Spring and Autumn Annals. Sagehood became the goal of learning as a live-long activity, not a state that one stepped into and preserved, and learning tied together intellectual understanding and moral knowledge.

Ch’eng I provided a justification for many of the things that eleventh century literati wanted to believe. He reunited “heaven and man.” He provided a way to understand the Mencian claim that human nature was good. He offered an understanding of human internality, and the relationship between internality and the cosmos, that led to engagement with society rather than a retreated from it, such as he presumed to be the case with Buddhists and Taoists. To a greater degree than other cosmologists he tied moral knowledge to an expanding and open-ended intellectual engagement with the world. He gave substance to the belief that there was a single unitary way. In contrast to Su Shih, for whom the apprehension of truth was would always be mediated by personal character and experience, Ch’eng I envisioned direct and certain knowledge.

Ch’eng differentiated what he was doing from what he saw as the main activities of literati intellectual culture. “Those who learn today have divided into three. Those of literary ability are called *wen-shih* and those who discuss the Classics are stuck in being teachers. Only those who know tao are [engaged in] ju learning.”<sup>164</sup> Not only did he privilege his learning, which he called Tao-hsüeh, he claimed that he alone defined what it meant to be a *Ju*. This was a new kind of *Ju*, one whose priorities were not defined by politics. The grave declaration he wrote for his Ch’eng Hao asserts:

When the Duke of Chou died, the Way the Sages was no longer practiced. When Mencius died the Learning of the Sages was no longer transmitted. When the Way was no longer

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<sup>164</sup> I shu 6.95; there are two other versions of this; see I shu 18.187.

practiced there was no good government for a hundred generations. When the Learning was no longer transmitted there were no true ju for a thousand years. When there was no good government, literati were still able to illuminate the Way of good government by learning indirectly from others and transmitting it to later times.<sup>165</sup> But when there were no true ju everyone was lost and did not know where to go. Human desire went free and heavenly principle was destroyed. The gentleman was born 1400 years later. He apprehended the learning that has not been transmitted in the surviving Classics; his will was to use This Way of Ours to enlighten this people of ours.<sup>166</sup>

If history shows that having the right political foundation could not preserve morality, then the restoration of morality depended on learning as something independent of politics. Ch'eng no longer was concerned with how to make politics serve moral ends, he was asking how individuals could become moral. There is little to suggest that he, or Ch'eng Hao after his short flirtation with the New Policies, saw political reform as a priority. Nevertheless in Southern Song it would become clear that these ideas had great significance for those who were concerned with how literati could be socially responsible.<sup>167</sup>

### Trends in Southern Sung Intellectual Culture

After the ideological excesses of Hui-tsung's reign and the loss of the North China plain dynastic restoration and then survival were the pressing issues of the day. The court retreated

<sup>165</sup> Mencius 4B22, "I have not had the good fortune to have been a disciple of Confucius. I have learned it indirectly from him through others." Tr. Lau, Mencius (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books, 1970), p. 132.

<sup>166</sup> Erh Ch'eng chi 二程集 (Pei-ching: Chung-hua, 1981), vol. 2, 11.640.

<sup>167</sup> Ch'eng I had little to say about politics and institutions, with the exception of calling for the restoration of the clan system (*tsung-tzu fa*) on the grounds that it was necessary to have hereditary ministers and would teach people to respect their ancestors and origins, something that would ultimately be good for the authority of the court. The Ch'eng brothers' political proposals are reviewed in Hou Wai-lu et al., Sung Ming li-hsüeh shih, pp. 127-132.

from the New Policies program of organizing and transforming society and of demanding ideological unity of the literati. Although the court sometimes tried to accommodate the ideological opponents of the New Policies without disowning Wang An-shih, its basic stance was to deny the relevance of ideology to government. The examinations recognized this by, most of the time, offering two tracks, the pre-New Policies literary examination and a New Policies style “meaning of the Classics” examination. The proscription of “false learning” in 1195-1202 was an attack on those who tried to organize officials into ideological camps in opposition to the court, not a defense of any well-defined ideology of its own.

However, among the literati – not just officials – ideological movements flourished, spreading out in networks from their local bases as proponents of different intellectual positions found receptive audiences among the increasing numbers of schools and students, exceedingly few of whom had any hope of passing the examinations. The rise of private academies which were associated with particular networks of teachers provided an institutional context for the spread of movements and the formation of literati opinion to a far greater degree than had been the case in Northern Sung.<sup>168</sup> What is striking about the movements about which we know the most – Chu Hsi and Tao-hsüeh, the statecraft thinkers, and Lu Chiu-yüan’s group, is their loss of faith in government service as the only means to take responsibility for society. The formation in southern China of a literati intellectual culture at the local level that was not fully embedded in the bureaucracy continued through the Mongol conquest. Much of the credit for this belongs to the Tao-hsüeh movement and its entrepreneurial spokesman Chu Hsi (1130-1200) based in northern Fujian and to the statecraft scholars of eastern Che-chiang, such as Yeh Shih (1153-1223), who promoted the idea of a smaller state that facilitated private economic development.

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<sup>168</sup>Walton, Linda Academies and Society in Southern Song China (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

Wang An-shih and Su Shih continued to draw attention, but neither found spokesmen who further developed their ideas and organized support.<sup>169</sup>

### *The Tao-hsüeh Movement in Southern Sung*

The Southern Sung Tao-hsüeh advocates (discussed in another chapter) saw the Ch'eng learning as an alternative not only to Buddhism and Taoism but also to the New Policies and the “Wang Learning” that justified them. Against imperial claims to superiority and centrality, Tao-hsüeh eventually offered its own “continuity of the Way” (*Tao-t'ung* 道統) a line of moral authority that went from the sage kings, to Confucius and Mencius, to Sung dynasty Tao-hsüeh scholars.<sup>170</sup> But Neo-Confucianism in Southern Sung was also southern, whereas in the Northern Sung it had been largely northwestern. It envisioned ways of maintaining national unity quite different from the court-centric model promoted under the New Policies. On the cultural front, for example, Southern Sung Tao-hsüeh promoted an education system supported by private wealth. Private academies and family schools were parallel to the state system but somewhat independent of it, and they offered a curriculum that was defined by local traditions and scholarly networks as well as by the requirements of the examination system. They also offered Neo-Confucians an institution for disseminating their teachings.<sup>171</sup> They addressed

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<sup>169</sup> For a different conclusion about the possibility of a rival center of authority see Chang Hao “The Intellectual Heritage of the Confucian Ideal of *Ching-shih*” Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-dragons, ed. Tu Weiming, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996): 72-91.

<sup>170</sup> The most influential formulation of the Tao-t'ung concept comes from Chu Hsi's son-in-law Huang Kan. Some scholars have recognized that Tao-hsüeh was a challenge to imperial autocracy rather than a defender of it. See, for example, Alan T. Wood, *Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1995) and writings of Wm. Theodore de Bary, *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind-and-Heart* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), *The Message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), *Learning for Oneself* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

<sup>171</sup> Thomas H. C. Lee, Government Education and the Examinations in Sung China (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1985); Linda Walton, Academies and Society in Southern Song China

themselves not only to officials and their families but also to local elites that were transforming themselves into literati. On the social front they defended the role of local literati elites in society, while stressing their moral duty to maintain ethical standards and act responsibly in local society and in office. Neo-Confucians presented themselves as defenders of extended family structures and lineage solidarity and they devoted considerable attention to the creation of family and lineage rituals. They encouraged the creation of local institutions which would be led by literati families: the charitable granary was an alternative to the “Green Sprouts Policy” of the New Policies and the “Community Covenant” offered a model of lateral elite community relations grounded in morality as an alternative to the *pao-chia* 保甲 village organization.

The rise of Tao-hsüeh, with its own publications, rituals, and shrines, demonstrated that literati could share ideas about morality that were not promulgated or modeled by the court.<sup>172</sup> Its advocates doubted the value of examination system learning, and at times even of examinations, but in the thirteenth century they began to dominate examination discourse.<sup>173</sup> The court’s enshrinement of the Neo-Confucian masters in the Confucian temple in 1241 was a measure to gain literati support. Neo-Confucians saw officials not as activists who could transform society through institutional leadership and reward and punishment but, ideally, as cultivated individuals who influenced others by their personal illustration of ethical behavior. Social transformation in the Tao-hsüeh vision required the moral transformation of individuals, and that was a matter Neo-Confucians intended to keep in the hands of true scholars, it did not belong to the court and

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(Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999).

<sup>172</sup> Ellen G. Nieskar, “The cult of worthies : a study of shrines honoring local Confucian worthies in the Sung Dynasty (960-1279)” (Ph.D. Columbia University Columbia University, 1993), and Chu Ping-tzu, “Tradition building and cultural competition in Southern Song China (1160-1220): the way, the learning, and the texts” (Ph. D. Harvard University Harvard University, 1998).

<sup>173</sup> Hilde Godelieve Dominique De Weerd, “The composition of examination standards: Daoxue and Southern Song Dynasty examination culture” (Ph. D. Harvard University Harvard University, 1998).

ruler by virtue of power and position, even if they wanted the latter to recognize the correctness of their ideas and efforts. As Ichiki Yasuhiko has shown, Tao-hsüeh established the concepts, texts, institutions and networks for a literati moral culture in local society.<sup>174</sup>

### *The “Yung-chia” Statecraft Scholars*

At the same time Tao-hsüeh was gaining prominence, a series of statecraft scholars from Wen-chou in Che-chiang, with its seat in Yung-chia county, were gaining a following. Yung-chia thinkers were heirs to multiple traditions. In the Northern Sung there were local scholars who were associated with Wang An-shih’s learning, such as Wang K’ai-tsu 王開祖, and with Chang Tsai and the Ch’eng brothers, such as Chou Hsing-chi 周行己 (*chin-shih* 1091). The Southern Sung Yung-chia scholars – most famously Hsüeh Chi-hsüan 薛季宣 (1125-1173), Ch’en Fu-liang 陳傅良 (1137-1203), and Yeh Shih 葉適 (1150-1223) – in addition to teaching in Wen-chou had ties to networks of scholars in Fu-chien (Chu Hsi), Chin-hua (Lü Tsu-ch’ien and Ch’en Liang), Ning-po (Lu Chiu-yüan, Yang Chien and Yüan Hsieh).<sup>175</sup> By the late twelfth

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<sup>174</sup> A recent study of how this came is Ichiki Tsuyuhiko 市來津由彦, *Shu Ki monjin shūdan keisei no kinkyū* 朱熹門人集團形成の研究, (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 2002). Ichiki sees the rise of Neo-Confucian local culture as giving the state apparatus regulatory power from below in addition to its top-down authority; I would stress the tensions that this created between local literati communities and the state apparatus.

<sup>175</sup> The most thorough account of the development of the Yung-chia school is Chou Meng-chiang 周夢江, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p’ai* 葉適與永嘉學派, (Hang-chou: Che-chiang ku-chi ch’u-pan she, 1992), chaps. 3-6; on Yeh Shih’s connections to other schools see chaps. 7-10. Pu Niu, “Confucian Statecraft in Song China: Yeh Shih and the Yongjia School” Ph. D. Arizona State University, 1998, provides a useful discussion of similarities and differences between Yeh Shih and Chu Hsi, Ch’en Liang, and Lu Chiu-yüan. A more detailed account of the ideas in this section will be found in Peter K. Bol, “Reconceptualizing the Nation in Southern Song Statecraft,” in *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Sinology*, (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yüan, forthcoming).

century the historically minded Yung-chia scholars were taking issue with Tao-hsüeh and their respective spokesmen, Yeh Shih and Chu Hsi, who had often been political allies, were criticizing each other on intellectual grounds.

Southern Sung statecraft scholars differed from Tao-hsüeh activists in their focus on learning from history and their interest in reforming political institutions, fiscal policy, and military affairs rather than moral cultivation.<sup>176</sup> Yet the kinds of reforms they envisioned – and which through their activity as teachers and writers they spread among literati – supported the strengthening of local society and private wealth that Tao-hsüeh depended on to prosper. But just as importantly they provided an alternative both to the New Policies vision of an activist and expanding state and to Ssu-ma Kuang's model of a small state managing a static society. The hallmark of Yung-chia statecraft theory was the belief that improving the general well being depended on private landed wealth, craft and industrial production, and commerce and that the state, rather than trying to command society and the economy, should facilitate the private economic initiative.<sup>177</sup>

As Yeh Shih described it this would be a smaller state. Although he has been seen as supporter of an aggressive and expensive foreign policy Yeh might better be described as a pragmatist who called for a strong national defense precisely because foreign states were

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<sup>176</sup> Compared to studies of Tao-hsüeh, little has been written about the flourishing Southern Sung tradition of statecraft writing and its similarities and differences with Northern Sung. In English note the articles collected in and editors' introduction to *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, Conrad Schirokauer and Robert Hymes, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Of particular importance are Hoyt C. Tillman, *Utilitarian Confucianism: Ch'en Liang's Challenge to Chu Hsi* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1982), and *Ch'en Liang on Public Interest and the Law* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); and Winston Lo, *The Life and Thought of Yeh Shih* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1974).

<sup>177</sup> Chou Meng-chiang, chap. 12; Chang I-te, pp. 214-8. Pu Niu, pp. 164 ff., argues that Chen Liang stressed the importance of merchants and commerce whereas Yeh was inclined to favor the wealthy and landholders.

independent actors.<sup>178</sup> The central states (*chung-kuo*) existed relative to the states that surrounded it.<sup>179</sup> National defense did not require a large state, he held, and argued for reducing the size of government, cutting taxes, and giving the provincial authorities and military commanders greater autonomy.<sup>180</sup> The decentralization of power, both on the borders and in domestic provincial administration would allow a smaller state to be more effective. However he stopped short of calling for a return to feudalism, as did some Neo-Confucians.<sup>181</sup>

Turning to the relationship between the ruler and the bureaucracy, Yeh argued that the emperor's authority came from exactly those virtues which made his position dependent on bureaucratic support: delegating authority to officials, accepting criticism, following advice, respecting honorable men, and forsaking desire in the face of pleasure.<sup>182</sup> Yeh in fact played a leading role in forcing Emperor Kuang-tsung to abdicate the throne in 1194, a move the Neo-Confucians supported.<sup>183</sup> He also reconsidered the relationship between the state apparatus and the populace with the aim of differentiating the *kuo* 國 as an administrative entity with its own traditions, from the populace. The populace was not part of a whole defined by the *kuo* and its productive power did not belong to the *kuo*.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Yeh Shih 葉適, *Yeh Shih chi* 葉適集 (Pei-ching: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1961), pp. 637-43, 684.

<sup>179</sup> *Yeh Shih chi* p. 760.

<sup>180</sup> On Yeh's view of the proposed northern campaign see Chou Meng-chiang, *Yeh Shih yü Yung-chia hsüeh-p'ai* pp. 202-4; Chang I-te 張義德, *Yeh Shih p'ing-chuan* 葉適評傳, (Nan-ching: Nan-ching ta-hsüeh ch'u-pan she, 1994), pp. 88-94, and his "Letter to the Commissioner of Military Affairs" (上西府書) in *Yeh Shih chi*, p. 540, discussed in Lo, *Yeh Shih*, p. 50.

<sup>181</sup> Lo, *Yeh Shih*, p. 124 ff. Note Hu Yin's attack on the centralized administrative system as being intended to benefit the ruler alone versus the feudal system that benefited all, quoted as the commentary for Liu Tsung-yüan's "On Feudalism," in Chen Te-hsiu's *Wen-chang cheng-tsung* 文章正宗 (SKCS) 13.15a-19b

<sup>182</sup> *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 636.

<sup>183</sup> Lo, *Yeh Shih*, p. 84 ff.

<sup>184</sup> *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 644-51.



In antiquity it had been the case that the ruler, through his officials, was responsible for both the material welfare of the populace and its moral education, but this was no longer the case in Yeh's view, if only because the services the government offered did not justify the revenue it sought to extract.<sup>185</sup> The government should draw resources from the populace on the basis of what the populace did for itself and not on the basis of state command, he contended, in return for which it had some responsibility for providing relief. It should not engage in the redistribution of wealth or land by confiscating land from large landowners. The rich were the vital source of local leadership and stability. What the state could do was facilitate a better distribution of the populace and the literati across regions by opening new areas to development.<sup>186</sup>

Yeh rejected Wang An-shih's attack on the mediating role of local elites, Chang Tsai's egalitarian agrarian society led by local worthies, and Ssu-ma Kuang's notion of a world free of social change. The state's role in "managing wealth" (*li cai* 理財) meant undertaking those measures that would increase private wealth. It should maintain the money supply and through its monetary policy prevent the kind of inflation and deflation that would lead to declines in production. And it should demonstrate that it could be a fair and predictable actor in the economy, rather than a self-aggrandizing opportunist.<sup>187</sup> This meant reducing those revenue measures that allowed government to take advantage of the private economy. Revenues would be reduced but a smaller bureaucracy and army would need less. By using the Privy Purse to cover shortfalls the imperial establishment would be reduced as well.<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Chou Meng-chiang, p. 189.

<sup>186</sup> "Affairs of the Populace," *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 651-7.

<sup>187</sup> "Plans for Wealth," *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 657-655. For Yeh on economic policy also see Chou Meng-chiang, chap. 12.

<sup>188</sup> Lo, *Yeh Shih*, pp. 124-35, 60-73. Chou Meng-chiang, chap. 13.

Yeh saw his views as conclusions reached through learning and in “On Literati Learning (*shixue* 士學)” he argued for studying practical matters such as the monetary policy and the legal system.<sup>189</sup> He justified further expansion of educational opportunities, and thus decreasing chances of passing the examinations, on the grounds that it would both increase the pool for recruitment and improve local understanding of the larger picture.<sup>190</sup> At the same time he thought local government should employ literati as clerks and allow clerks entrance into the regular civil service.<sup>191</sup> Like other statecraft scholars Yeh historicized the Classics. They were, he argued, a reflection of governance in antiquity rather than the basis for ancient government, and should not be reduced to truths points that could transcend context.<sup>192</sup> One might appreciate the intentions of the ancients in reading the *Rites of Chou*, without thinking it justified a complete theory that could be imposed on the present with no thought to the differences in context.<sup>193</sup> Historians needed to write about modern and recent history as well.<sup>194</sup>

In the eyes of Ancient Style writers and New Policies officials the ultimate justification for government was its ability to increase the well being of all the populace, by investing in local improvements, organizing society, and spreading education, and training the literati to serve its officials. But it was the cosmologists and Ch’eng I who provided the philosophical basis for the idea that literati could be socially responsible and gain moral authority irrespective of who was in power. The Tao-hsüeh movement in Southern Sung is evidence that the literati were discovering how much they could do themselves. The strength of this new order would be

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<sup>189</sup> “Literati Learning, Part I,” *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 673-5.

<sup>190</sup> Chou Meng-chiang, chap. 17. John W. Chaffee, *The Thorny Gates Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

<sup>191</sup> “Clerks,” *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 808-9.

<sup>192</sup> “General Principles,” *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 693-5. On Yeh’s critical attitude toward the Classics and Neo-Confucian claims see Chang I-te, chap. 4.

<sup>193</sup> “*Rites of Chou*,” *Yeh Shih chi*, pp. 702-4.

<sup>194</sup> Chou Meng-chiang, chap. 16.

confirmed by its ability to survive the conquest of the south by the Mongols and their northern armies in the 1270s.